

UC-NRLF



B 4 009 678













ON THE  
CAUSES OF THE SUCCESS  
OF THE  
ENGLISH REVOLUTION  
OF 1640-1688.





ON THE  
CAUSES OF THE SUCCESS  
OF THE  
ENGLISH REVOLUTION  
OF 1640-1688.

A DISCOURSE.

DESIGNED AS AN INTRODUCTION TO THE HISTORY OF THE REIGN  
OF CHARLES THE FIRST.

BY M. GUIZOT.

---

LONDON:  
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET.  
1850.

REPLACING

## ENGLISH REVOLUTION.

---

THE success by which the English Revolution was crowned has not only been permanent, but has borne a double fruit: its authors founded Constitutional Monarchy in England; and in America, their descendants founded the Republic of the United States. These great events are now completely known and understood; time, which has given them its sanction, has also shed over them its light. Sixty years ago France entered on the path opened by England, and Europe lately rushed headlong in the same direction. It is my purpose to show what are the causes which have crowned constitutional monarchy in England, and republican government in the United States, with that solid and lasting success which France and the rest of Europe are still vainly pursuing, through those mysterious trials and revolutionary struggles, which, according as they are well or ill passed through, elevate or pervert a nation for ages.

B

M773820

It was in the name of religion and liberty of conscience that the conflict which began in the sixteenth century, and, though occasionally suspended, has been constantly renewed, was undertaken. The tempest which still agitates the world, or hurries it along in an impetuous torrent, gathered in the inmost recesses of men's minds, and burst over the Church before it reached the State.

It has been said that Protestantism was a political rather than a religious revolution; an insurrection of worldly interests against the established order of the Church, rather than the outbreak of an ardent conviction concerning the eternal interests of man. This judgment has been superficially formed and lightly pronounced; and the error on which it rests has led the powers, whether spiritual or temporal, who have adopted it, into a line of conduct fatal to their own security. Intent on repressing the revolutionary element of Protestantism, they have overlooked or misunderstood its religious element. The spirit of revolt is doubtless very powerful, but not powerful enough to accomplish, alone and unaided, things of such magnitude. It was not merely to shake off a yoke, it was also to secure the free profession and practice of a faith, that the Reformers of the sixteenth century rose up against authority, and persevered in the conflict. This is demonstrated by a decisive and incontestable fact. The two most protestant countries of Europe,

England and Holland, are still the countries in which the Christian faith has the greatest vital energy and power. It betrays a strange ignorance of human nature to believe that religious zeal would have remained at such a pitch of elevation, after the successful termination of the revolt, if religion had not been the mainspring of the whole movement.

The revolution which took place in Germany, in the sixteenth century, was religious and not political ; that in France, in the eighteenth, was political and not religious. It was the peculiar felicity of England in the seventeenth century, that the spirit of religious faith and the spirit of political liberty reigned together, and that she entered upon the two revolutions at the same time. All the great passions of the human soul were thus excited and brought into action, while some of the most powerful restraints by which they are controlled remained unbroken ; and the hopes and aspirations of eternity remained to console and tranquillize those whose earthly hopes and ambitions had suffered shipwreck.

The English Reformers, especially those who aimed only at political reform, did not think a revolution necessary. The whole past history of their country, its laws, traditions, and precedents, were dear and sacred in their eyes ; they found in them the justification of their claims, as well as the sanction of their principles. It was in the name of the Great Charter, and of all those statutes by which, through

the course of four centuries, it had been confirmed, that they demanded their liberties. For four centuries not a generation of men had dwelt upon the soil of England, without uttering the name and beholding the presence of Parliament. The great barons and the people, the country gentlemen and the burgesses, met together in 1640, not to dispute with each other claims to new acquisitions, but to regain, in concert, their common inheritance ; they met to recover their ancient and positive rights, not to pursue the boundless combinations and hopes suggested by the imagination of man.

The claims and projects of the religious reformers who sat in the Long Parliament were not, however, equally legal. The Episcopal Church of England, such as it had been constituted, first by the cruel and capricious despotism of Henry VIII., and afterwards by the able and persevering despotism of Elizabeth, did not satisfy them ; it was in their eyes the offspring of an incomplete and inconsistent reformation, still so nearly approaching Catholicism as to be incessantly exposed to the danger of a relapse. They meditated a complete remodelling and a new constitution of the national church. In this party the revolutionary spirit was more ardent and open than in the party mainly occupied with political reforms. Nevertheless the religious innovators were not utterly absorbed by the fantasies of their own minds. There was an anchor to

which they all held fast ; a compass by which they all were guided. The Gospel was their great charter ; subject, it is true, to their interpretations and commentaries, but anterior and superior to their will. They held it in sincere veneration, and, spite of their pride, humbled themselves before the law which they had not made.

Such were the guarantees for moderation in the two impending revolutions, afforded by the dispositions of their several partisans. Providence also granted them an especial favour ; they were not doomed, at the outset, to commit the dangerous wrong of attacking spontaneously, and without a clear and urgent necessity, a mild and inoffensive ruler. In England the royal power was the aggressor. Charles I., full of haughty pretensions, though devoid of elevated ambition, and moved rather by the desire of not derogating in the eyes of the kings, his peers, than by that of ruling with a strong hand over his people, twice attempted to introduce into the country the maxims and the practice of absolute monarchy : the first time, in presence of Parliament, at the instigation of a vain and frivolous favourite, whose presumptuous incapacity shocked the good sense and wounded the self-respect of the humblest citizen : the second time, by dispensing with Parliament altogether, and ruling alone by the hand of a minister, able and energetic, ambitious and imperious, though not without greatness of mind, de-

voted to his master, by whom he was imperfectly understood and ill supported, and aware too late that kings are not to be saved solely by incurring ruin, however nobly, in their service.

To check this aggressive despotism, more enterprising than energetic, and assailing equally, in Church and State, the ancient rights and recent franchises to which the country laid claim, the mind of the people of England did not go beyond legal resistance, and this they entrusted to the hands of their representatives in Parliament. The resistance was as unanimous as it was legitimate. Men the most unlike in origin and character, the great nobles, gentlemen and citizens, those attached to the court and those the most remote from its influence, the friends and the enemies of the established church, all rose with common accord against this accumulated mass of grievances and abuses; and the abuses were overthrown, and the grievances vanished, as the old walls of a deserted citadel crumble at the first stroke of its assailants.

In this burst of the indignation and the hopes of the country, some minds of greater foresight, some more scrupulous consciences, already began to feel anxiety. Vengeance not only disfigures, but perverts justice; and passion, exulting in its rights, oversteps not only those rights, but its own intentions. Strafford was justly accused, and unjustly condemned. The political party, which did not



desire the ruin of the Episcopal Church, suffered the Bishops to be insulted and humiliated, as if they were utterly and hopelessly overthrown. The blows which struck down the usurpations and the unlawful pretensions of the Crown were so ill aimed that they wounded it in its just prerogatives. The birth of revolutions is always preceded by vague but intelligible warnings, and gleams of light thrown on the future by passing events; and the revolutionary spirit, lurking under the demand for reforms, was now betrayed by alarming incidents and denounced by courageous voices. But the importance and the splendour of victory blinded people to the perception of faults, and stifled the presentiment of their attendant dangers.

When the work of reform was accomplished; when the grievances which had excited the unanimous reprobation of the country were redressed; when the powers in which these grievances had originated, and the men who were the instruments of those powers, were overthrown, the scene changed. People began to ask themselves, How were these conquests to be maintained? What security was there that England would henceforward be governed according to the principles and the laws which she had restored?

The political reformers began to be perplexed. Above them was the King, who conspired against them while he was making concessions: if he

recovered the power in the government, still compatible with the reforms that had been effected, he would turn it against reform and the reformers. Around them were their allies, their army, and the religious innovators (Presbyterians or other sectaries), who would not rest satisfied with political reforms, but, in their hatred to the Church, would strive not only to throw off her yoke, but to trample her under foot and impose their own upon her. For the safety of their work and of their persons, the leaders thought fit to remain under arms; and even if they had not wished it, their soldiers would have compelled them to do so.

There was in their eyes only one possible guarantee for safety; namely, that Parliament should retain the sovereign power of which it had just taken possession; that it should be rendered permanently impossible for the King to govern contrary to the will of Parliament generally, and of the Commons' House in particular.

This is the result at which Constitutional Monarchy has arrived in England. This is the end pursued by its partisans two centuries ago. But in the seventeenth century they possessed neither the political lights nor the political virtues which that system of government requires.

The heart of man is at once so arrogant and so weak that he would fain combine the splendour of triumph with the repose of an inviolable peace. To

surmount obstacles is not enough ; he wants to annihilate them for ever, that he may dismiss them entirely from his mind ; victory itself does not satisfy him, unless he enjoy it in all the insolence of complete security. Constitutional monarchy, however, is not formed to gratify these inconsistent desires and bad tendencies of the human heart. To none of the powers which it invests with a joint action, can it grant the pleasure of undivided and secure domination. On all, even on that which has the ascendancy, it imposes the unremitting labour of forced alliances, mutual concessions, frequent compromises, indirect influences, and a struggle incessantly renewed, with incessantly recurring chances of success or defeat. It is on these conditions that constitutional monarchy gives predominance to the interests and feelings of the country ; which, in its turn, is bound by its choice of such a government, to moderation in its desires, to vigilance and patience in its efforts.

In the seventeenth century neither the King nor the Parliament of England understood these conditions of their common government. The King was obstinately bent on remaining, the House of Commons on becoming, the immediate and infallible sovereign of the country. Nothing short of this could satisfy the pride or allay the fears of either party.

When things had reached this point, a great

division took place among the reformers. Some, more far-sighted or more timid, undertook the defence of legal order and of the threatened monarchy; others, more daring or less scrupulous, embarked on the current of revolution.

At this moment arose the two great parties, which, successively assuming different names and aspects, have for two centuries presided over the destinies of England;—the party devoted to the maintenance of the established order of things, and the party favourable to the growth of popular influences; the Whigs and the Tories; the Conservators and the Innovators.

To attain its end,—the maintenance and exercise of the supreme power which it had seized,—the Parliament could no longer rest satisfied with the reform of abuses and the restoration of legal rights. The ancient laws must be altered, and all powers concentrated in its own hands.

Within the Parliament, the conflict was severe, but short. The monarchical party tried to array itself around the King, and to govern in his name. These first essays at constitutional government failed ere they had well begun; they failed through the faults of the King, who was inconsistent, frivolously obstinate, and as insincere with his counsellors as with his enemies; through the inexperience of those counsellors, alternately too exclusive and too yielding, and constantly thwarted or betrayed in

the Palace, as well as in the Parliament; and finally, through the distrust and the pretensions of the revolutionary party, determined not to yield or rest till the absolute power, which they sought to overthrow, should have passed into their own hands.

On the occasion of a new remonstrance, which it was proposed to present to the King against the old grievances (as if they had not already been redressed), the strength of the two parties was distinctly put to the trial. The debate became so violent that, in the House of Commons itself, the members were on the point of coming to blows. Victory was determined in favour of the revolutionary party by eleven votes. Fifty days after this vote, the fugitive King quitted his palace of Whitehall, which he re-entered only on his way to the scaffold. The House of Commons immediately ordered that the country should, with all diligence, be put in a state of defence. The Parliamentary struggle was at an end: Civil War had begun.

---

At this solemn moment, patriotic regrets and gloomy forebodings were heard in both parties; and especially in that of the King, which was less confident in its strength, and perhaps also in its cause. But these sentiments were not general. In most minds the ardent desire and hope of victory were

predominant. The spirit of resistance to illegality and oppression has been one of the most noble and salutary dispositions of the English people throughout the whole course of their history. Docile and even favourable to authority, when it acts in virtue of the laws, they are intrepid in resisting any violation of what they regard as the law of the land and their own right. Both parties, even in the midst of their dissensions, were animated by this sentiment. The revolutionary party struggled against the encroachments and oppressions which England had endured from the King, and which she had still to apprehend from him. The monarchical party resisted the illegal and oppressive acts which Parliament was actually inflicting on the country. The respect for right and law, though continually disregarded or violated, was deeply rooted in all minds, and threw a veil over the injuries and the evils which civil war was preparing for the country.

In neither party were the habits and manners very repugnant to civil war. The Cavaliers were impetuous and violent, and still given to that habit of combat, that taste for an appeal to force, which characterized the feudal times. The Puritans were rigid, harsh, and pertinacious: they had imbibed the passions, together with the traditions, of the Hebrew people, who defended and avenged their God by destroying his enemies. To both, the sacrifice of

life was familiar; in neither, did bloodshed excite any horror.

Another less obvious cause hastened and aggravated the explosion. The contest was not merely between the political and religious parties; beneath that, lay a social question—the struggle between the various classes of society for influence and power. Not that the separation between these classes was as profound and as hostile in England as it has been in other countries. The great barons had maintained the liberties of the people together with their own, and the people did not forget the debt they owed them. The country gentlemen and the burgesses had sat together in Parliament, in the name of the Commons of England, for three centuries. But during the preceding century a great change had taken place in the relative strength of the several classes of society, without any analogous change in the government. Commercial activity and religious zeal had given a prodigious impulse to wealth and thought among the middle classes. It was observed with surprise in one of the first parliaments in the reign of Charles I. that the House of Commons was three times as rich as the House of Lords. The higher aristocracy no longer possessed the same preponderance in the nation as heretofore, and, though they still rallied round the King, could no longer afford him the same support. On the other hand, the citizens, the country gentlemen

and the yeomen (then a very numerous class), did not exercise an influence over public affairs proportionate to their weight in the country. Their growth in wealth and importance had not been accompanied by a corresponding increase of political power. Hence, among them and the classes immediately below them, there existed a fierce and vehement spirit of ambition, ready to burst forth on the first occasion or pretext. Civil war offered a vast field to their energy and their hopes. At its outbreak, it did not wear the aspect of an exclusive and jealous social classification; for many country gentlemen, and many even of the most considerable of the great nobles, marched at the head of the popular party. Nevertheless, the mass of the nobility on the one hand, and of the citizens and the people on the other, ranged themselves, the former on the side of the Crown, the latter on that of the Parliament. Unerring symptoms already showed that a great social movement was going on in the midst of a great political struggle; and that the effervescence of an ascendant democracy was forcing its way through the ranks of an enfeebled and divided aristocracy.

Each party found in the state of society—it would hardly be too much to say, in the laws of the country—natural and almost regular means of maintaining their rights and enforcing their claims by arms. Ever since the reign of Elizabeth, the



House of Commons had laboured with ardour to destroy the last tottering institutions of feudalism. But profound traces of it still remained; and the habits, sentiments, and even occasionally the rules, to which it had given birth, still determined the relations of the possessors of fiefs, both to the King their suzerain, and to the part of the population grouped around their castles or settled on their lands. These people rose at their bidding, and attended them to festivities or to battle, as they themselves answered the call of the King when he claimed their services. It was one of those epochs of transition in which ancient laws, honoured though antiquated, still determine the actions of men on whom they are no longer binding. Attachment had taken the place of servitude; the fidelity of the vassal had become the loyalty of the subject; and the Cavaliers, whether rich or poor, thronged around the King, ready to fight and to die for him, and followed by a troop or a handful of servants, equally ready to fight and to die for them.

On the other hand, the middle classes, consisting generally of artisans and townspeople, had, under other forms, their means of independent action, and even of waging war. Organized in municipal or trading corporations, they met freely to discuss and settle their affairs; they levied taxes, called out militia or trained bands, and, in short, deliberated and acted within the circuit of their walls, or the often

obscure limits of their charters, almost with the independence of petty sovereigns. And the extension of commerce and manufactures, the wealth, connexions and credit of these corporations, invested them with a power which they used in the service of their cause with the audacity of new-born and inexperienced pride.

Neither in the country nor in the towns did the King possess the authority of a central and exclusive administration. The business of the nation, financial, military, and even judicial, was almost entirely in the hands of local and nearly independent authorities. In the country, it was in the hands of the landholders; in the towns, in those of municipal or other corporate bodies; and these respectively appropriated to themselves as much as possible of the administrative functions, for the purpose of serving the cause in which they had engaged.

And where these established means were insufficient, where the action extended beyond the sphere of the ancient and recognised local powers, the ancient spirit and usage of association (which was still in full force in the country) promptly established practical and efficient concert between the counties and cities; between the different parts of the country, or the different classes of society. By means of this concert, free and extemporaneous associations levied taxes and troops, formed com-

mittees, and elected leaders charged with the conduct of the part they were to take in the general defence of the cause they had embraced.

It was in an association of this kind—that of the Eastern Counties—formed to support the Parliament, that Cromwell gave the first proofs of his capacity, and laid the first foundations of his power.

In a community thus organized and thus disposed, civil war was neither impossible nor revolting. It soon overspread the whole country; in some places under the command of the agents of the King or the Parliament, in others spontaneously levied by the inhabitants; and maintained on both sides with an energy sometimes sad, but always unhesitating, as the exercise of a right and the fulfilment of a duty. Each party felt profoundly the justice and the greatness of its cause; each party made those efforts and sacrifices in its behalf which elevate the mind, even when confused and misled, and give to passion the appearance, and sometimes the merit of virtue. Nor was virtue itself wanting to either party. The Cavaliers, though generally violent and licentious, had in their ranks the noblest models of the high-bred and generous manners of men of ancient family, full of unexacting devotedness and dignified submission. The Puritans, arrogant and hard, rendered an inappreciable service to their country; they founded the austerity of private life

and the sanctity of domestic manners. The two parties fought with the most determined acrimony ; but, in the midst of the mortal struggle, they did not renounce all sentiments of order and peace. There were no sanguinary riots, no judicial massacres. There was civil war, fierce, obstinate, full of violence and of evil, but without cynical or atrocious excesses, and restrained, by the general manners of the people, within certain bounds of justice and humanity.

I hasten to render this justice to the conflicting parties ; for the virtues of parties are frail and transient when breathed upon by the hot breath, and shaken by the storms, of revolutions. In proportion as civil war was prolonged, respect for rights and sentiments of justice and generosity grew more and more feeble. The natural consequences of a state of revolution manifested themselves ; gradually perverting, in both parties, the ideas and habits of law and morals. The King was in want of money ; the Cavaliers used this as a reason or a pretext for unlicensed pillage. The taxes levied by the Parliament did not suffice for the expenses of the war ; the Parliament established a system of confiscation more or less disguised, which, by branding its enemies with the name of Malig-nants, rendered it master of their revenues, often even of their lands, and thus became a daily source of wealth to its partisans. In this general and

protracted disorder, amidst the abuses of power and the extremities of distress, bad passions were incessantly excited, and lawless desires exposed to the temptation of chance and opportunity; hate and revenge took possession of the more energetic minds; fear and baseness, of the feebler. The Parliament, which pretended to act in the name of the laws, and to serve the King, even while resisting him, was compelled to clothe its most violent deeds in false and hypocritical language. Among the Royalists, many, mistrusting the King's duplicity, called upon to make sacrifices beyond their means, and daily more doubtful of the success of their cause, felt the warmth of their devotion decline, and either submitted in despair, or sought compensation in licence. Falsehood, violence, rapacity, pusillanimity and selfishness under every variety of form, rapidly increased among the men engaged in the conflict; while the people, who took only a remote or indirect part in it, and were subjected to the detestable influence of the spectacle of a revolution, gradually lost their notions of right, duty, justice and virtue, or preserved only dim and wavering traces of them.

At the same time they suffered severely in their pecuniary interests. War, unrestrained by discipline and spread over the whole face of the land, ravaged town and country, destroying the subsistence, or defeating the hopes and the labours of the

people. The financial measures of Parliament, made subservient to local hostilities and intrigues, threw landed property into confusion and depreciated its value. All security for the business of the present or the labours of the future was at an end. Even domestic life was affected by the general disorder, and families the furthest removed from political strife were sharers in the general calamity. And as alarm always travels further and swifter than suffering, the country, fallen into a state of fearful distress, was a prey to an anxiety more general and more fearful than the distress itself.

Its complaints and wishes were not long in bursting forth. War was still raging in all its fierceness, when already the cry of "Peace," "Peace," resounded at the doors of the Parliament. Frequent petitions demanding it were brought up by assemblages of men so numerous and so excited that it was necessary to disperse them by force. In the House of Commons, notwithstanding the general secession of the original Royalist party, a second was formed in the name of peace, whose main object was to seize every occasion of proclaiming its necessity, and of opening negotiations with the King. These were attempted several times, but failed, through the intrigues of those, in both parties, who were averse to the mutual concessions which peace would have required; and through the incapacity or the weakness of those who, while they

would willingly have consented to the inevitable conditions of a peace, dared not openly accede to them. Civil war continued to rage; but the party which had begun it was divided, and the struggle for and against revolution was renewed in the Parliament.

Out of doors, especially in the country, the people did not rest satisfied with demanding peace at the hands of the Parliament; they tried to enforce it themselves, locally at least, on both the contending parties. Associations were formed and took arms, declaring that they would no longer suffer their fields to be ravaged either by Parliamentarians or Royalists, and giving battle to whichever party fell in their way;—a sort of armed neutrality in the midst of civil war. The attempt, however vain, sufficed to prove how profoundly the furious and obstinate conflicts of the two parties were at variance with the sentiments and interests of the country.

So long as the war was hot and the issue doubtful, the sufferings and impressions of the people, though they produced a reaction in favour of peace, excited in them but a feeble and hesitating return of loyalty towards the King. They accused him of stubbornness and falsehood, and complained bitterly of his secret plots with the Queen and the Catholics, who were the objects of vehement hatred and dread. They reproached him, at least as much as the

Parliament, with the evils and the prolongation of the war.

When the war was ended, and the King a prisoner in the hands of the Parliament, the reaction in favour of peace assumed a more general and decided royalist character. The King was utterly powerless, and bore his misfortunes with dignity. The Parliament was all powerful, and did not put an end to the calamities of the country. On the Parliament now rested the whole responsibility ; on the Parliament were thrown all the discontents, the disappointed hopes, the suspicions and hates, the curses of the present, the terrors of the future.

Urged by this national sentiment, and enlightened by the imminence of the danger, the political reformers, (who had been the first leaders of the parliamentary resistance,) and in their train a portion of the religious innovators (the Presbyterians, who, though enemies to the Episcopal Church, were friendly to the monarchy), made a last effort to bring about a peace with the King and to put an end at once to war and revolution.

They were sincere, and even ardent, in their desire, but they were still full of the revolutionary prejudices and pretensions which had repeatedly rendered peace impossible. By the conditions they sought to impose upon the King, they required him to sanction the ruin they had brought on the Monarchy and the Church ; they required him to



complete with his own hands the demolition of the edifice in which alone he could hope for safety, and of that on which his faith was fixed.

They had proclaimed as a principle, and reduced to practice, the substantial sovereignty of the House of Commons ; and now, constrained in their turn to resist the popular torrent, they were astonished at finding distrust and hostility, instead of support and strength, from the high aristocracy and the church which they had decried and demolished.

Even if they had succeeded in concluding a peace with the King, that peace would have been vain. It was too late to stop the course of the revolution, and too soon to bring it to its permanent and satisfactory conclusion. God had only begun to execute his judgments and to teach his lessons. As soon as the first leaders of the insurrection tried to rebuild the structure which they had overthrown, the real revolutionary party arose ; and treating their newly acquired wisdom with open contempt, drove them from the Parliament, condemned the King to death, and proclaimed the Republic.

---

### 3

Two centuries have elapsed since the English Republic put to death King Charles I., and, in a few short years, crumbled to dust on the soil still wet with the blood it had shed. The French Republic

has since exhibited the same spectacle. And we still hear it said that these great crimes were acts of a great policy; that they were enjoined by the necessity of founding those Republics which hardly survived them a day!

Thus do men try to clothe their folly and wickedness in the garb of greatness; but neither the truth of history nor the interest of mankind can tolerate so daring and mischievous a falsehood.

The fervour of religious conviction and religious liberty had degenerated in some sects into an arrogant aggressive fanaticism, intractable to all authority, and delighting only in outbursts of intellectual licentiousness and spiritual pride. Civil war had converted these sectarians into soldiers, at once disputatious and devoted, enthusiastic and disciplined. Having risen in general from the humbler classes and professions, they greedily relished the pleasure of commanding and predominating over others; they exulted in the belief that they were the chosen and powerful instruments of God's will and judgments on earth. By alternately appealing to religious and democratic enthusiasm, and enforcing military discipline, Cromwell had gained the confidence of these men, and had become their leader. He had spent his youth in the excesses of an ungovernable temperament, which were succeeded by fits of ardent and restless piety, and by active services rendered to the people among

whom he lived. As soon as a political and war-like career opened before him, he rushed headlong into it, as the only one in which he could find room for the employment of his powers and the satisfaction of his passions. He was the most vehement of sectaries, the most active of revolutionists, the ablest of soldiers; ready alike to speak, to pray, to conspire, and to fight; at one time pouring out his thoughts with a warmth and frankness that carried away his hearers; and, in case of need, playing the hypocrite with a cool and inexhaustible mendacity, and a fertility of invention, which surprised and perplexed even his enemies; enthusiastic yet worldly, rash yet perspicacious, mystical yet practical, he set no bounds to the soarings of his imagination, and he felt no scruples in perpetrating any act which the necessity of the case enjoined; determined on success at all costs, discerning and seizing with matchless promptitude the means necessary to obtain it, and impressing on all, whether friends or foes, the conviction that he was gifted above all men with the qualities necessary to the vigorous conduct and complete success of an enterprise.

To such a party, led by such a man, a Republic was sure to be welcome. It gratified their passions, opened a vista to their most ambitious hopes, and gave security to the interests which civil war had created in their favour. It delivered the country

into the hands of the army by the genius of its commander, and the sovereign power into those of Cromwell by the disciplined aid of his soldiers.

Respect for their sincerity, their genius, and their misfortunes, restrains me from fully expressing my opinion concerning some illustrious men. Sidney, Vane, Ludlow, Harrington, Hutchinson and Milton were Republicans, but rather in accordance with the political systems and models of antiquity, than from religious fanaticism. They were men of lofty spirits and proud hearts, full of noble ambition for their country and for mankind ; but so injudicious and so insanely proud, that they learned nothing either from power or from defeat. Credulous as childhood, and obstinate as age ; blinded by hope to their perils and their faults ; they were, while preparing the way by their own anarchical tyranny for a more consistent and a more powerful tyranny, persuaded that they were founding the freest and most glorious of governments.

Excepting these sects enrolled into regiments, and these *coteries* constituting a Parliament, nobody in England wished for a Republic. It offended against the traditions, the manners, the laws, the old attachments, the old reverence, the regular interests, the good order, the good sense, and the moral sentiments of the country.

Irritated and alarmed by the manifest aversion

of the public for their designs, Cromwell and the sectaries thought that a form of government so generally and vehemently rejected could only be established by instantly striking a terrible and irrevocable blow, which would prove its strength and vindicate its right. They determined to consecrate the Republic on the scaffold of Charles I.

But even the ablest leaders of revolutions are not long-sighted. Intoxicated by the passion, or hurried away by the necessity, of the moment, they do not see that the very acts which secure their triumph to-day, will bring about their downfall to-morrow. The execution of Charles I., which struck the country with consternation, delivered England into the hands of Cromwell and the Republicans. But the blow which killed the King rebounded with mortal force on the Republic and the Protector; from that moment, their rule was nothing more than a violent and ephemeral domination, branded with that mark of consummate iniquity which dooms the strongest and most imposing power to certain ruin.

Charles the First's judges did everything in their power to divest their act of its fatal character, and to represent it as a judgment of God, which they were commissioned to execute. Charles had aimed at absolute power, and had carried on civil war; many rights had unquestionably been violated, and much blood had been shed, by his

orders or with his consent. Upon him, then, they threw the whole responsibility of the misgovernment and the war; they called him to account for all the liberties that had been trodden under foot, and all the blood that had been spilt;—nameless crimes which only death could expiate. But the conscience of a people, even when distracted with trouble and terror, is not to be so completely misled. Others, besides the King, had been guilty of oppression and bloodshed. If the King had violated the rights of his subjects, the rights of the Crown, which were no less ancient, no less established by law, and no less necessary to the maintenance of the public liberties, had been equally assailed and violated. The King had made war, but in his own defence. It was notorious that at the moment when he resolved on war, they were preparing to wage it against him; to force him, after all the concessions he had made, to surrender the small remains of his rights and prerogatives, and the last wreck of the legal government of the country. And now that the King was utterly subdued, he was tried and condemned without law and contrary to law for acts which no law had ever contemplated or treated as crimes; which it had never occurred either to the King or the people to regard as coming under the jurisdiction of men, or punishable by their hands. What universal indignation and horror would have burst forth if the most

obscure citizen of England had been treated in the same manner, and put to death for crimes created *ex post facto* by pretended judges, who had been his enemies, and who were now aspiring to succeed him in his power! And what no one would have dared to attempt against the meanest Englishman, was now actually done against the King of England, the supreme head of the Church as well as of the State, the representative and the symbol of authority and order, law and justice; of everything in human society that approaches the boundary and suggests the idea of the attributes of divinity.

There is no fanaticism, however blind, which, even in the moment of its triumph, has not seen some bright ray of truth break upon it,—sometimes even from its own centre; there is no policy, however deep and crooked, which has not heard some solemn and unexpected protest from the conscience of mankind. Vane and Sidney, the two most illustrious men of the Republican party, and one of whom had been nominated among the King's judges, refused, either from conscientious or prudential scruples, to take any part in the trial, and left London to avoid being witnesses of it. And when the House of Commons, now absolute sovereign of the country, nominated the republican Council of State, twenty-two, out of its forty-one members, positively refused to take the oath which

contained an approval of the King's sentence. The republican regicides, with Cromwell at their head, were compelled to accept as colleagues men whom nothing could induce to pass for their accomplices.

The resistance which the new form of government encountered was at first merely passive, but it was almost universal.

Six out of the twelve judges absolutely refused to continue the exercise of their functions, and the six others only consented to sit, on condition that they should continue to administer justice according to the ancient laws of the country. To these terms the Republican Parliament acceded.

Orders had been given that the Republic should be proclaimed in the City of London. The Lord Mayor refused ; he was superseded and thrown into prison : but though a new Lord Mayor was chosen, three months passed away before the proclamation was attempted, and when at length it was read, several aldermen absented themselves from the ceremony, which, in spite of the presence of troops, was interrupted by popular insult. The Common Council of the City was re-organized ; several of the members elected refused to serve, and it was necessary that a smaller number than that appointed by law should be empowered to act. The Government was on the point of being driven to abolish the franchises of the City.

When the Mint was ordered to coin Republican



money, the Master declared that he would have nothing to do with it, and threw up his office.

Civil functionaries and beneficed clergymen were required to take an oath of fidelity to the Republic, and though it was rendered as simple and inoffensive as possible, thousands gave up their places or their livings rather than comply. More than a year after the establishment of the Republic, the Assembly of the Presbyterian Clergy, held in London, formally declared that it was not lawful to take it. In the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge it was made compulsory; upon which the most eminent members of those learned corporations resigned their offices.

The order issued to efface and destroy the insignia of royalty on all public edifices throughout England, was scarcely anywhere executed. It was reiterated several times with no better success; and the Republic, which had been established for more than two years, was compelled to repeat the same injunction all over the country, and to render the parishes responsible for its execution.

Lastly, it was not till nearly two years after the King's death, that the Republican Parliament dared to pass a formal vote, declaring that the authors, judges, and executors of that act had done their duty, approving the whole proceeding, and ordering it to be entered on the journals of Parliament.

Never did a people, vanquished by a revolu-

tionary faction, and enduring its defeat without open insurrection, more distinctly refuse to recognise the authority of its conquerors.

The passive resistance of the country to the Republican Government was soon succeeded by the attacks of declared enemies.

The first proceeded from the Republicans themselves. In the seventeenth century, as in the nineteenth, that name covered ideas, designs, and parties profoundly different in character. Behind the reformers of political institutions came the reformers of social order, and behind them, again, the destroyers of all order and all society. The Republic of Sidney and of Milton did not go far enough to satisfy the passions and pretensions of fanatics or democrats, more blind and more unbridled in proportion as their social condition was meaner. Levellers openly arose, and Communists began to show themselves. The Republic had hardly existed six months when four insurrections of sectarian soldiers, excited and kept alive by an incessant fire of pamphlets, sermons, and popular processions, revealed to the world the dissensions of its partisans, and endangered the stability of its government.

The royalist party was more tardy in its revolt. Its repeated defeats, the execution of the King, and the relentless severity with which it was kept down, had struck it with a sort of stupor. But the dissensions of its conquerors and the evident aversion

of the people to the new government, soon awakened it to life and hope. In two years, seven plots and insurrections, emanating from pure or presbyterian Royalists, who were equally ardent enemies of the Republic, proved to its leaders that the blow which had been fatal to the Monarch, had not eradicated the attachment to the Monarchy.

In a short time a secret understanding arose between the royalist and the republican conspirators, the Cavaliers and the Levellers. They conspired together ; for a common hatred obliterates all lesser hostilities.

And while England was torn by this wild anarchy, Scotland and Ireland, both royalist, though from very different motives and with very different sentiments, openly declared against the Republic, proclaimed Charles Stuart king, and engaged in a war for his restoration ; the former inviting Charles himself, and the latter his representatives, to take the lead in the insurrection.

In this dislocation of the three kingdoms, while plots laid by opposite parties, but tending to the same end, were no sooner defeated than revived, and alternately raised or overthrew the ambitions and the schemes of all parties throughout the country, the bonds of society were loosened, and the springs of authority rapidly gave way. There was no longer any order or security. In the administration of counties and

parishes, in the general and local finances, in public employments and private fortunes, all the interests of civil life were thrown into confusion. The high roads, and even the neighbourhood of cities, were infested with gangs of robbers, whose political passions served as pretexts for their crimes. They asked those whom they stopped, whether they had taken the oath of fidelity to the Republic, and maltreated or released them according to the tenor of their answer. It became necessary to station bodies of troops at various points, and to keep several regiments of cavalry incessantly in motion; and even these energetic measures of repression had but a very imperfect success; for the disorganization of society produced more disorders than it was in the power of the Republican Government to put down.

Though assailed by dangers so numerous and pressing, the leaders of the Republican Parliament betrayed no weakness. They possessed energy and firmness, the offspring, in some, of faith in their cause, in others, of imperious personal interests. Their noblest hopes and their most selfish fears, their honour and their life, were equally engaged in their enterprise. They devoted themselves to it courageously; but they made a blind and prodigal use of those vicious means which save a cause for a moment to ruin it completely in the end.

From the very outset they carried political

tyranny almost to its utmost limits ; for they decreed that any man who, in the course of the civil war, had adhered to the King or showed hostility to the Parliament, should be incapable of being elected Member of Parliament, or of holding any important office in the state. Shortly after, the same disability was extended to every municipal function, and even to the right of voting at elections ; thus, at one stroke, reducing all the adversaries of the Republic to the condition of Helots, without political rights or political existence in their own country.

The oath of fidelity had, at first, been required only from civil or ecclesiastical functionaries, and their refusal was followed by no other consequence than the loss of their places. But the great number of refusals irritated and alarmed the conquerors. For the gratification of their anger, and in the vain hope of freeing themselves from their uneasiness, they imposed the oath on every Englishman above eighteen years of age ; and, visiting political dissent with civil incapacity, they enacted that whoever refused to take it, should not be allowed to appear in a court of justice, even in defence of his own interests.

Sequestration and confiscation were employed against the vanquished, with the most intolerable and revolting injustice ; not according to any fixed rule or general principle, but by particular and fluctu-

ating decisions. They were aggravated or extenuated according to the wants of the moment, the avidity of a powerful enemy, or some unforeseen accident. The lists of names were incomplete and arbitrary ; so that those who felt the danger impending over them, could never know with any degree of certainty what was their situation, or what their probable fate.

Since the cessation of the war, the only weapon left in the hands of the conquered Royalists or Levellers was the Press. They used it boldly, as the conquering party had done through the whole of their struggle with the King. They might well think they had a right to do so ; since Mr. Mabbott, the last censor under the monarchy, had resigned his office because he would no longer serve as an instrument of tyranny ; and Milton, the first Secretary of the republican Council of State, had eloquently vindicated the liberty of the press, as an essential right of a free people. Though the republican government did not appoint a new censor, it passed a law on the press, rigorous enough to satisfy the most jealous despotism. The privilege of printing was confined to four cities, London, York, Oxford, and Cambridge ; no journal or other periodical writing could appear without a licence from the government ; printers were compelled to find sureties ; and not only were those who had in any way contributed to a seditious publication declared guilty and

punished, but every purchaser of any such publication was subject to a fine, if he did not deliver up the book to the nearest magistrate within four and twenty hours, and give notice of its dangerous tendency.

There was one liberty, that of conscience, which, it might have been presumed, would have been more respected by the Republic. It had always been put forward by the republican sectaries as one of the main objects of the war. They not only stood in need of it for themselves, but their principles imperatively enjoined it, for they rejected all general and obligatory church government, and held the right of each separate congregation to govern itself. But from one of the most deplorable perversities of our nature, it happens that men's inconsistency nowhere displays itself in so full and glaring a manner as on the very point where it is the most iniquitous and revolting. The very men who had, in practice, devoted themselves with admirable constancy to the cause of religious liberty for the last half century, and, in theory, had made that liberty the basis of all Christian society, no sooner attained to sovereign power, than they absolutely denied all liberty to three large classes of persons, Catholics, Episcopalians and Freethinkers. Against the Catholics persecution knew no bounds ; their faith and worship were absolutely proscribed ; the laity

were subjected to disabilities and privileged confiscations, and the priests to imprisonment, banishment and even death. The Protestant Episcopalian Church, overthrown and dispersed by the presbyterian parliament, had to undergo yet harder trials under the republican; for the sectarians wanted to wreak their vengeance for the past, and to free themselves from fears for the future. They went so far as to forbid the presence of her ministers, and the use of her liturgy and prayers, even in the bosom of private families. As to the Freethinkers, less rare at that time than is usually supposed, if one were found who, from imprudence or from hatred of hypocrisy, openly declared his opinions, he was arrested, imprisoned, excluded from parliament, and deprived of every public employment, however humble. The Presbyterians, as enemies of the Episcopalians, enjoyed a certain degree of toleration; but it was limited, precarious, and often troubled by the suspicion or the violence of the sectaries, to whom their church government and their monarchical sentiments were equally offensive. Vainly did a few more generous spirits in the Republican Parliament make some attempts to soften these rigours; they soon felt, and resigned themselves to their own impotence. Religious liberty existed only for the victorious republican sects, who forgot or tolerated their own religious differences in favour of a common poli-



tical cause, which they knew was exposed to continual peril.

To maintain a political tyranny so vast and inexorable, judicial tyranny was indispensable; and the Republican Parliament exercised it without scruple. The King's trial, that monstrous violation of all the principles and forms of justice, became the model of state trials generally. To curb the seditious spirit of the Levellers, martial law was sufficient; but when a royalist insurrection broke out, or a royalist plot was discovered, a high court of justice, appointed by the Parliament itself, was immediately constituted, and was in fact a special commission, exempted from the rules, and affording none of the guarantees of law. If the Parliament feared that the proceedings would excite the indignation or the pity of the country, the publication of them was absolutely prohibited. These extraordinary tribunals were employed not only against men of weight, but also to terrify obscure masses, innocent of any crimes cognizable by the ordinary courts. Before the Republic was proclaimed, some Thames boatmen had petitioned for peace with the King. The Parliament sent their petition, signed with their names, to the new high court which it had instituted for the trial of five of the principal royalist leaders; thus using the instrument framed for the destruction of the great, to strike terror into the humble. In cases in which a resort

to these high courts would have caused too much popular agitation or too much preparation and delay, the Republican Parliament administered justice itself: by a mere vote of its own, and in order to crush a stubborn foe, or to subserve the passions or cover the faults of a leader, it imposed enormous fines, and sentenced to the pillory or banishment. Some of the political reformers, for example, whose spirit the republican party had not broken, although it had driven them from parliament, were arbitrarily detained in remote prisons. Cavaliers, catholics, soldiers of fortune who had served in the royal army, all, in short, who were liable to any suspicion, were banished from London in a mass. And if any royalist writer, instead of conspiring in secret, openly denounced the real or supposed crimes of the republican chiefs, he was arrested and sent to the Tower, where he often remained awaiting his trial till released by death.

These violent oppressions in the midst of anarchy seemed more odious and intolerable coming from men who had demanded so much of the King, and promised so largely for themselves, in the way of liberty; from men most of whom were till then obscure, and had risen from ranks and conditions in which the people were not accustomed to look for rulers. The authority which they wielded in so arbitrary a manner rested on their personal merit and the military force at their command; but the former,

unless it is transcendant, is always a disputable claim to the exercise of sovereign power ; whilst the latter is a title which alienates those who submit to it, so long as they retain a particle of independence or self-respect.

Though dazzled both by their elevation and their danger, several of the republican leaders had a sense of their situation, and of the public feeling with regard to them ; and, at the summit of power, they felt that they were isolated and generally contemned. There is no power that can give its possessor confidence in isolation, or indifference to contempt. They ardently desired to gain other titles to dominion than those they had acquired by civil war and regicide, and to raise themselves by some great national act to the height of their fortunes. They meditated and prepared various reforms in the laws and the administration of justice ; but the most important of these (of very questionable merit in themselves) were vehemently opposed by the most considerable men of their own party, and, instead of raising the Republic in general estimation, would have drawn upon it the unpopularity which attached to sectarians and levellers. It was clear that no measure of internal government would give the republican leaders the consideration which they wanted. They turned their thoughts therefore abroad. The dignity and interests of the country in its relations with foreign powers might be maintained with

little effort and no risk. The age of religious wars was drawing to a close, while that of political wars had not yet begun. None of the European governments, however they might detest the new Republic, had any intention of attacking it; on the contrary, all sought its friendship, which they hoped to use against their rivals. Mere neutrality secured to England peace, entire independence in her internal affairs, and a great weight in those of the Continent. But the parliamentary leaders wanted more than this. Of the three powerful states from which the Republic had the most to fear or to hope, France and Spain were monarchical and catholic, and were the natural, though disguised adversaries of the Republic; whilst Holland, as protestant and republican, naturally sympathized with England. An idea arose, and rapidly produced a great excitement among the daring and restless spirits of the Parliament. Why should not England and Holland unite to form one great republic, which would soon secure throughout Europe the triumph of their common policy and faith? Here was matter to inflame the most pious, and to employ the most ambitious. What would be the gratitude of England towards the men who should thus enhance her greatness, while satisfying her conscience and her pride! If this could be brought about, the Monarchy would be forgotten, and the Republic firmly established,

and the Republican Parliament would become a senate of kings.

The republican leaders engaged in the project with enthusiasm: some using indirect influences, by industriously propagating their opinions; others undertaking solemn embassies, and endeavouring to lay the foundation of a firm union between the countries. But revolutionary dreams are yet vainer as to the foreign, than as to the internal affairs of a state. The English Republicans were pleased to forget that, as a consequence of the fusion which they contemplated, Holland would be entirely absorbed by England, and that she might not be disposed to consent to this arrangement. And, in fact, she refused to listen to the bare insinuation of the project. The Dutch Republicans, taught by a century of laboriously earned successes, were too proud to sacrifice their country, and too wise to bind its destinies, to this utopian scheme of an infant and yet tottering Republic. On the other hand, the cause of the English royalists was favoured, not only by the House of Orange, but by a large portion of the Dutch people, whose feeling of justice was outraged by the murder of Charles I., and whose good sense was shocked by the wild visions of the English sectaries; the just pride of Holland instantly dissipated the dream to which the ambitious pride of the English Parliament had given birth. But such attempts, even when abortive,

are not made with impunity. From the distrust and jealousy sown between the two countries, (already rivals in commercial and maritime greatness,) and of wounded self-love and bitter resentment between their rulers, a war speedily arose; so that the magnificent diplomatic visions of the protestant and republican Parliament of England ended in an open rupture and a violent conflict with the only republican and protestant state on the continent of Europe.

Thus, abroad as well as at home, the principles of the English Republicans were belied, and their hopes defeated, by their own policy. They had promised freedom, and they had exercised tyranny. They had promised the union of protestants and the triumph of protestantism, and they had raised a war between the countries which were the main bulwarks of the protestant cause.

It was in vain that the republican government had gained battles and suppressed its enemies. Notwithstanding its successes, and the general submission of the country, the Republic did not take root in the soil, and its leaders daily lost ground in the respect and consideration of the people.

Oliver Cromwell, the man who had been the principal author of the King's death and the establishment of the Republic, had a presentiment of this result, and now prepared to take advantage of it. No sooner was this change consummated than a

mighty but natural metamorphosis took place in Cromwell. Till then, goaded by fanaticism and ambition, he had bent his whole powers to the destruction of the enemies of his faith and the obstacles to his fortune. But now that the work of revolution was accomplished, he saw that the next necessary step was to re-construct the government. Providence, which rarely endows one man with powers so different, had marked out Cromwell for this double work. The revolutionist disappeared and gave place to the dictator.

While Cromwell's great and vigorous mind perceived what the new state of things imperiously demanded, he saw no less clearly that the government which his colleagues were attempting to establish would not satisfy the exigencies of the times. Neither the institutions nor the men were equal to the occasion. The institutions, from their total want of unity, stability, and of any principle of life and growth, tended to foster intestine war and create perpetual uncertainty at the seat of power; whilst the conduct of the men was determined by narrow or chimerical views, and by petty and blind passions. It was easy to perceive that such institutions and such leaders would perpetuate the struggle between the government and the country. From the time when the Parliament and its chiefs were exalted into sovereigns, Cromwell's good sense had weighed them and found them wanting. He

saw that no strong and regular government could spring from such a source.

From that moment his chief care was to dissociate himself from the policy and the destiny of these men or these institutions ; to keep aloof from their faults and their reverses, and, while he served the Parliament, to separate himself from it.

But to separate himself was not enough ; it was necessary that he should grow in strength and renown, while others were working their own ruin. Cromwell foresaw the downfall of the Parliament and its leaders, and he determined not only not to share their fall, but to rise upon their ruins.

Men whose greatness lies in action do not lay far-reaching and elaborate plans of conduct. They are prompted by instinct and ambition : they look at the facts which every day brings forth, and every event modifies, as they really are ; they see the course which these facts point out, and the chances which it offers ; they enter upon it with spirit, and advance boldly as far as it will lead them. Cromwell went onwards to the dictatorship without any distinct perception of the end to which he was going, or the perils and sacrifices of the way ; but he never hesitated or halted in his course.

The Parliament unconsciously seconded his views ; it offered him exactly the position, isolated and distinct from the reigning power, of which he was in quest. Cromwell's presence in London was so



inconvenient and disquieting to the leaders, that they asked him to take the command of the army equipped for the reduction of Ireland, which had risen for Charles Stuart, or rather, against the Parliament. Cromwell not only waited to be entreated, but made large demands in favour of his numerous friends, to whom he was a zealous patron; and stipulated, on his own account, for a well-provided army, high dignity, unlimited powers, and all the other means of assured success. They were so eager to be rid of him that they gave him all he demanded. His departure was solemn and magnificent. Sermons were preached, predicting or praying for his success; Cromwell himself spoke and prayed in public, and quoted passages from the Bible of an encouraging nature, which he applied to the war he was about to undertake. He marched out of London surrounded by a numerous guard of officers splendidly equipped. At Bristol, where he took ship, the people from the neighbouring country flocked in crowds to see him. At the moment of withdrawing himself from the eyes of the English people, he neglected nothing that could excite their expectations, which everything conspired to raise.

It was England that he hoped to gain by the conquest of Ireland. There he would have to deal with a hostile race and faith, the one despised, the other detested, by the English people. He made

unrelenting war upon them. He massacred, plundered, and drove out the Irish; shrinking as little from cruelty in the field as he had done from mendacity in the parliament; covering every crime with the plea of necessity; and prone to believe in it whenever it could shorten the road to success.

His victories and his renown soon began to awaken the anxiety of Parliament. Cromwell was the subject of all conversations; the people talked of him with admiration, and men of sagacity endeavoured to divine his conduct and his destiny. At the moment of his setting out to join the army in Ireland, a rumour had got abroad, and had caused a general agitation in Scotland, that his destination was not Dublin, but Edinburgh. Others said that on his return from Ireland he intended to cross to France, but nobody could tell on what pretext, or with what design. Pamphlets entitled "The Character of King Cromwell" were seized. He had reached that point in the ascent to greatness at which a man's most insignificant actions, or the most frivolous circumstances regarding him, excite intense curiosity in the public and solicitude in his rivals. The leaders of the Parliament thought they might take advantage of his going into winter-quarters at Dublin to recall him to London. Cromwell did not obey; he did not even reply; but abruptly renewing the campaign, pursued his work

of destruction in Ireland, and did not return to England till fresh and graver perils threatened the Republic, and opened new prospects of independence and greatness to himself.

Scotland having recalled Charles Stuart, the Republic and the Monarchy were about to meet face to face, and the Republic stood in need of a tried champion to oppose to the King. The Parliament wished to send two, Fairfax and Cromwell; but Fairfax having refused, it appointed Cromwell to the sole command; with infinite regret, but constrained, for the safety of the Republic, to give him another kingdom to conquer.

Cromwell's mode of carrying on the war, and his whole conduct in Scotland, were totally different from those which he had pursued in Ireland. He was no less moderate, patient, and conciliating to the Scotch Protestants, than he had been violent, harsh, and pitiless to the Irish Catholics. The royalist party was surrounded, and even divided, by deep-laid dissensions: there were Presbyterians, more fanatical than royalist, who served the King with infinite distrust and reservations of all sorts; sectarians as ardent and as democratic as those of England, full of sympathy with Cromwell and his soldiers, and more disposed to second than to oppose them. Cromwell humoured and took advantage of all these dispositions. He was eager to do battle with the King's army, but full of consi-

deration for the country. He opened separate negotiations with the leaders whom he knew to be wavering or well inclined to himself, and entered into religious correspondences, conferences, and discussions with the Scotch theologians; showing himself no less able than anxious to please, and even when he failed to convince or seduce, leaving a profound and favourable impression on his hearers. By these means he advanced into Scotland, daily gaining ground by his arms and his address, and detaching counties, cities, and chieftains from the royal cause. Charles found himself pressed upon, surrounded, and in a short time in personal danger. With the impetuosity of youth, he suddenly took a daring and desperate resolution; abandoning Scotland to Cromwell, he marched rapidly at the head of his army to England, determined to try the fortunes of Royalty in the heart of the Republic.

A month had not elapsed from the time when Charles and his army set foot on the soil of England, before Cromwell had come up with them, and had beaten and dispersed them at Worcester, where Charles had just been proclaimed King. While Charles was wandering from one place of refuge to another under various disguises, and seeking a boat to bear him from the shores of England, Cromwell re-entered London in triumph, surrounded by members of the Parliament, the Council of State, the

Common Council of the City, and an immense crowd proclaiming him their deliverer.

Jealousies and hatreds were for a moment forgotten in the joy of deliverance from great and imminent danger. The Parliament heaped gifts and favours upon Cromwell; among others, a large grant of lands, and the palace of Hampton Court as a residence. But though the most distrustful lavished marks of gratitude and deference upon him, the enthusiasm of the republican part of the people was more sincere and more valuable. No sooner has a revolution levelled the ancient dignities and grandeurs of a country in the dust, than its authors are eager to raise up new ones; their safety and their pride are equally concerned in seeing their work illustrated by glorious symbols, which they imagine will compensate society for those they have destroyed. Hence the pompous displays, the inordinate flatteries, the idolatry of language, with which popular bodies, however democratic, delight to intoxicate the men who climb on the ruins they have made. Sectaries and philosophers, citizens and soldiers, parliament and people, all, willingly or unwillingly, concurred in enhancing Cromwell's greatness, as if they themselves were rendered greater by it. The republicans of the city of London, who went out to harangue him on his return, told him, with exultation, that he was born "to bind kings with chains, and nobles

with fetters of iron." They were too short-sighted to perceive that these fetters would soon gall their own hands.

Cromwell received these honours and flatteries with an humility which, though the result of calculation, was not wholly destitute of sincerity. "To God alone," he continually repeated, "belongs the glory: I am only his weak and unworthy instrument." He knew how acceptable this language was to his country and his party; and he exaggerated it by incessant and emphatic repetitions, to please the men whose confidence and attachment he thus raised to the highest pitch. But it was also the expression of his own inmost thoughts. The power and providence of God, His continual action on the affairs of the world and the souls of men, were not, in Cromwell's mind, cold abstractions, or worn-out traditions, but deep and sincere convictions. Though his faith neither restrained his actions under the temptations of life, nor made him scrupulous about the measures necessary to success, it subsisted at the bottom of his heart, and inspired his words when he was strongly moved by the greatness of circumstances or of his own situation. It costs a man little, however, to talk humbly, and to call himself the instrument of God, when God makes his instrument the master of nations. Neither Cromwell's power nor pride were any losers by his humility.

His ambition not only rose with his station, but soared above it. While his language was so humble, sudden airs of sovereignty occasionally betrayed what was passing within him. On the field of Worcester, he wanted to grant knighthood to two of his bravest generals, Lambert and Fleetwood, and desisted with great ill-humour on being told that this was a royal prerogative. When he made his triumphal entry into London, and was greeted on all sides by popular acclamations, Hugh Peters, the sectarian preacher, who knew him well, was so struck with his countenance as he passed, that he exclaimed, "Cromwell will make himself our king." He had just saved the Republic, and subjugated two kingdoms, and as there was no longer anything great for him to do at a distance and by arms, he remained in London. Here then, on the one side, was Cromwell, powerful and unemployed, constantly receiving the visits of his officers and soldiers, and becoming the depositary of all discontents, and the centre of all hopes: on the other, the mutilated Parliament, not more than sixty or eighty members of which met daily; some of them earnestly and honestly intent on the business of the nation, but the greater number engaged in a scramble for places for themselves or their dependants; making their power subservient to their fortunes, or to their mean hatreds and vulgar quarrels; sinking deeper and deeper in selfishness;

isolated, unpopular, incapable of giving to the country either repose, or liberty, or security; yet apparently resolved to retain the sovereign power, as if the safety of England could require the perpetuation of so miserable a government.

For a long time Cromwell hesitated. When, at the moment of his triumph, he resumed his seat in Parliament, he had armed himself for the conflict with two great and popular questions;—a general amnesty proclaiming the termination of civil war, and an electoral law regulating the mode and time of convoking a new parliament. These two measures had long been proposed, but had remained buried in committees, and had only been brought out on critical days to gain popularity. By Cromwell's influence they now underwent serious discussion. The amnesty was voted with difficulty, after five months' debate, and numerous attempts at restrictions, especially pecuniary ones; these, however, were triumphantly defeated by Cromwell, who had too much sense to indulge in useless animosities, and was anxious to gain adherents and friends from all parties. But the decisive measure, the law of election, remained in suspense. Cromwell pressed for it; not however with ardour, and rather in order to exhibit in a strong light the selfishness of the parliamentary leaders, than to bring the debate to a speedy issue. He was himself greatly perplexed. What plausible arguments could



be found to induce the Parliament to dissolve itself? What would be the result of new elections? And would even new elections suffice to raise the character of the government and give it stability? Was the experiment of a Republic a successful one? Was not Monarchy more conformable with the laws, the habits, the sentiments, and the permanent interests of the country? If the country wanted and wished for monarchy, how was it to be restored? and in what measure? and in whose person? These questions were asked by Cromwell, not only in intimate conversation with a few leading men, but in conferences to which he invited officers of the army and members of the parliament. Their answers afforded him little satisfaction. The officers of the army persisted in their republicanism; the politicians inclined to monarchy would hear of none but the ancient one, and advised Cromwell to treat with its representative and his partisans for its restoration. At this he broke off the conversation, but afterwards returned to the charge, supple in appearance, but at bottom inflexible in his ambitious purposes; frank even to audacity when he wanted to carry men along with him; shamelessly hypocritical and deceitful when he wished to conceal his intentions. One advantage he never failed to gain from these intrigues; he committed the army more and more deeply to his struggle with the Parliament. The army, which

retained much of its original sectarian spirit, while it had acquired the military spirit during its long and formidable warfare, combined the passions of the fanatic with the interests of the soldier. Cromwell laboured incessantly to turn both against the Parliament. What an iniquity it was that what was due to the conquerors should be so ill paid, and that men who had neither fought nor suffered should reap all the fruits of victory ! What an insult to God that the counsels of his saints should be so little heeded ! Petitions presented by the council-general of officers, in the name of the whole army, haughtily demanded that their arrears should be paid, that the abuses in the government should be reformed, and that the hopes of God's people should be fulfilled. The Parliament, thus threatened, defended itself, and angrily attacked in its turn. It urged the dismissal of a considerable part of the army, and put up to sale that very palace of Hampton Court which it had given to Cromwell as a residence. This state of things subsisted for a year and a half. Both sides felt that the crisis was at hand. Which would be master ? The Parliament suddenly resolved to urge the very dissolution that had been required of it. It entered warmly into the discussion and the decision of the electoral law. But the object of this law was to maintain the power in the very hands from which it ought to have been withdrawn.

The actual members of the Republican Parliament were to be, of right, and without any re-election, members of the new parliament; the elections were only to fill up the vacancies in the assembly so as to complete the number required by law. And that the scheme might give entire security to the possessors of power, the committee charged with the scrutiny of the new elections, and empowered to admit or reject the elected, was to consist only of old members.

This was not a dissolution of a Parliament, it was a renewal and perpetuation of the same. Cromwell no longer hesitated. Suddenly breaking up a conference of officers assembled at his house at Whitehall, he went down to the House of Commons, and silently took his seat in the midst of the discussion on the law of election. At the moment when it was about to be put to the vote, he rose with premeditated abruptness and violence, and, taking advantage of the discredit into which the leaders had already fallen to overwhelm them with gross insults, which he knew would discredit them still further, he told them that they were no longer a parliament, ordered a troop of soldiers to drive them out of the house as intruders too long tolerated, and thus put a sudden end to the Long Parliament.

Nobody resisted, not a voice was raised in its defence; for though it had warm and faithful friends, its party was not numerous, and it had

military force and public opinion against it. All the other parties, whether they approved Cromwell or not, rejoiced at the expulsion of the parliament as an act of justice and a deliverance of the nation. Intimidated or impotent, the vanquished silently submitted; and the revolutionary leaders, who had carried on civil war for nine years, driven three-fourths of their colleagues from their seats, condemned their King to death, and tyrannically changed the constitution of their country, were compelled to acknowledge that the work of governing is far greater and more difficult than they had suspected it to be before they sank under it.

---

The Republic had been established in the name of Liberty, but, under the rule of the Parliament, liberty had been a vain name, covering the tyranny of a faction. After the expulsion of the Parliament, the Republic became in its turn an empty word, preserved like one of those falsehoods which still serve a purpose, though they have ceased to deceive; and the despotism of one man constituted for five years the Government of England.

Despotism, in an energetic and powerful nation, which has submitted to it in a fit of perplexity or lassitude, can subsist only on two conditions—order and greatness. Cromwell, once master, displayed

all the resources of his genius in impressing this character on his government. A stranger to the rancorous passions, the narrow and invincible prejudices, which characterize the sway of factions, it was his desire that all, without distinction of origin or party, Cavaliers and Presbyterians, as well as Republicans, might find protection and security for their civil interests, provided they abstained from political intrigues. The act imposing the oath of fidelity on all Englishmen, under pain of legal disabilities, was abrogated. The administration of justice was once more regular and habitually impartial. Cromwell, as revolutionary general, had gained intelligence and won over adherents from all parties; Cromwell, Protector of the Republic, endeavoured to rally round his government all the higher elements of society. He had too much good sense to desert the friends by whom he had risen to eminence, and to throw himself on the mercy of his former enemies; but a superior instinct taught him that so long as a government is not accepted and sustained by those whom their position, their interests and their habits render the natural supporters of political order, nothing can be completely organized or firmly established. This impetuous leader of popular innovators manifested the greatest respect for time-hallowed institutions. The sectaries, in their aversion to human learning and aristocratic or royal endowments, sought to destroy the Univer-

sities of Oxford and Cambridge. Cromwell saved them. Great by nature, and elevated by fortune, he soon acquired a taste for all that was great and lofty in talents and learning, present fame or ancient tradition; he delighted to surround himself with all that was eminent, and to protect it against coarse and vulgar antipathy. In support of this policy, in the maintenance of law and order for all, in the re-establishment of authority and the enforcement of respect, he employed that very army with which he had overthrown so many ancient dignities and powers; though its rigorous discipline and its devotedness to him were barely sufficient to repress the half-extinguished passions which still smouldered in its ranks.

In the foreign relations of England, Cromwell took a still juster view of the interests of his country and of his own position, and being less trammelled by party ties, obtained a much more complete success.

The first object of his policy was peace. From the moment of his accession to power, he laboured to re-establish or to confirm it throughout Europe; with Holland, Portugal, and Denmark. Laying aside not only those dreams of republican and protestant fusion which he had formerly entertained and fostered, but also religious and party animosities, he was eager to settle differences, and to close open questions; he was sometimes captious and

haughty in asserting the dignity of a new government, but always guided by good sense, never making extravagant demands, nor indulging chimerical schemes of ambition; and requiring abroad nothing but what was essential to the strength and security of his government at home.

Peace once secured, the next object of his policy was neutrality. It was just at the crisis of the struggle between the Houses of Austria and Bourbon, between Spain in her decline and France in her ascension. Both made eager and even disgraceful efforts to secure England as an ally. Cromwell listened to both, gave to both just as much hope as suited his own purposes, but bound himself to neither. On mature consideration, he thought that from Spain there was less to hope, less to fear, and more to conquer. He hoped to lay a broad foundation for the power and commerce of England in the New World. He therefore quitted his neutral position, but with so much judgment and moderation, that whilst, across the seas, his war with Spain was followed by the conquest of Jamaica, and near home his alliance with France secured to him possession of Dunkirk, he never took so decided a part in the contest of the two powers as to compromise the independence of the foreign policy of his country.

It was the constant rule of that policy, during his whole government, to be neither systematic nor violent, and to meddle no more in the affairs of

others than his own really required. For example, the Stuarts had taken refuge in France, where the court showed them favour, though timidly. That kingdom was then disturbed by the attempts of the Fronde to stir up a civil war. The Protestants, though not perhaps persecuted, were uneasy and discontented. The occasion appeared excellent, and the temptation was strong, for Cromwell to interfere to annoy his enemies, and to protect the political and religious cause to which he owed all his greatness. The Prince of Condé, and the city of Bordeaux, the chief and the stronghold of the insurgents, earnestly solicited him to that effect ; sending embassies, and reiterating their prayers and offers to obtain his support. Cromwell received their envoys, entertained them with hopes, sent in his turn agents to France, who were commissioned to sound the dispositions and to ascertain the strength of the Protestants and the Frondeurs, and thus gave serious uneasiness to Mazarin. Finding, however, that the French malcontents had no real strength, able conduct, or chance of success, he silenced all promptings of ambition and passion, disregarded all the offers he had received and all the hopes he had awakened, and treated with Mazarin, taking advantage of the fears he had inspired him with, to extort more favourable terms.

When an occasion of succouring oppressed Protestantism, less tempting indeed, but also less likely



to involve the country in trouble, presented itself, Cromwell seized it with eagerness. In order to protect some poor peasants driven out of their valley by the Duke of Savoy, he sent declarations, embassies, money, and threats; called on the Court of France to interfere, if it did not wish that he should do so; implicated the United Provinces and the Swiss Cantons in his measures; attained his end solely by moral force, and thus procured a signal satisfaction to the religious sentiments of the English people, without involving them in any formidable or uncertain conflict.

Whenever English interests of real, though secondary importance, required protection or reparation, Cromwell gave them energetic support, while he carefully kept them distinct from general or exciting questions. He sent Admiral Blake at the head of a large squadron into the Mediterranean, with orders to present himself wherever England had any claims to urge or complaints to make. Blake appeared successively before Leghorn, Algiers, Tunis, and Tripoli, settling all disputes with a high hand, though without inflaming them, and never retiring till he had obtained, by good will or by force, the redress of his country's grievances.

These various efforts, constantly crowned with success, were not fruitless; but, nevertheless, they did not accomplish the true and ultimate purpose of the conqueror. This government, which was so active with-

out temerity, and so adroit in flattering the national passions without servility ; which raised the dignity of the country abroad without involving it in disputes, and maintained order at home by means of revolutionary soldiers, did not take root in the country. Cromwell was obeyed, feared, admired ; England submitted to his genius and his vigour, but did not accept his rule. Consummate in the art of drawing men around him, he daily detached some from the old parties, and persuaded them to take active service under him, or at least to desist from all hostility. Good sense and weariness of civil dissensions, personal interest and weakness, baseness and perfidy, gave to him, as largely as to any man that ever ruled a people, all the support which such springs of action can afford to power. But the old parties, Cavaliers, Presbyterians, and Republicans, still subsisted, and though kept down, were still vigorous, and neither hopeless nor inactive. During the five years of Cromwell's reign, fifteen conspiracies or insurrections (not to speak of a number of obscure attempts) of the Royalists, the Republicans, or coalitions of both parties, menaced his government. He put them down with a strong hand ; but, severe or clement as the necessity of the case required, without cruelty and without pity. He employed by turns the regular action of the laws or arbitrary power, the jury or exceptional tribunals, an indefatigable police or a devoted army, secret arrests or

public executions, banishment, imprisonment, the sale of the conquered rebels as slaves in the colonies ; everything, in short, that could paralyze or strike terror into enemies. Nothing that was attempted against him succeeded. Every plot was defeated, and every rising crushed, the country taking no part in them and remaining tranquil. But, though witness of Cromwell's daily victories over his enemies, it had no faith in the rightfulness or the permanency of his power. He did not reign in their minds as a legitimate and unquestioned sovereign. At the summit of his greatness, he was in their estimation a resistless, but a temporary master ; without a present rival, but without a prospect of stability. He himself felt this, and knew it better than any one, for it was the character of his mind to see things as they were. Never was there a great spirit more ardent in hope and yet more free from illusion. While engaged in the overthrow of constitutional monarchy, he had learned that this was the only form of government which suited England, or could hope to endure. When he became master of the ruined citadel of the constitution, one thought took entire possession of his mind—to reconstruct it and establish himself within its ramparts.

It was the object of his incessant desire and labour to get together a Parliament with which he could co-operate in the work of government. He con-

voked four in five years; sometimes choosing, in concert with his officers, the body which he hypocritically called by that name; sometimes causing it to be elected in the very mode which the Long Parliament was on the point of adopting when he drove it out. He always treated these assemblies with great solemnity and deference at first; and though he used the most shameless artifices and the most unheard-of violence to obtain a majority, yet, even at the very moment of breaking with them, he was careful not to lead the nation to think that he intended to dispense with their concurrence.

The attempt was chimerical. None of the Royalists and very few of the Presbyterians consented to sit in his Parliaments. They were composed almost exclusively of the various factions of the republican party, amongst which the greatest irritation and dissension prevailed. Cromwell's partizans were not men to succeed by parliamentary tactics or talents for debate: his enemies, far more exercised in that sort of warfare, displayed all its resources to injure him; he had to encounter men whom he had overthrown, who were sincerely and passionately opposed to his tyranny, obstinate in their anarchical ideas and habits, and no less ungovernable than incapable of governing. He himself was continually furnishing them with subjects of complaint, and putting arms into their hands; for,

in his ascent to absolute power, he had not learned respect for rights, or patience under resistance and contradiction. Taught by an instinctive sagacity that, in his despotic loneliness, he was unable to found any permanent institutions, or even to consolidate his own power, he summoned a parliament, hoping with its help to create a durable government. But as that assembly, when convened, did not contain the natural elements of a conservative party, and was under the influence of men who had no ability for anything but destruction, Cromwell soon found it impossible to endure either their just liberty or their insane violence; and indignantly broke the instrument which he always found unmanageable, though he knew it to be indispensable.

At length he thought he had succeeded in assembling a Parliament which would understand and second his designs. He lost no time in causing the idea which possessed him, the restoration of the English monarchy in its ancient and complete form, to be laid before it. The proposal was made and debated in parliament, and publicly negotiated during more than two months between that body and the Protector. In this affair Cromwell displayed that strange mixture of impetuosity and caution, profound ability and gross hypocrisy, which he owed alike to nature and to art. His prudence was almost equal to his ambition. He did not choose to purchase his accession to royalty at the price of a

division in his party, already so narrow and tottering a base for a government to rest on. He wanted to become King without exposing the Protector to peril; he wanted not only that the crown should be offered to him, but that all the men of importance by whom he was surrounded, sectaries or politicians, officers or magistrates, should commit themselves to the offer. Even before the institution of the Protectorate and the expulsion of the Long Parliament, he had sounded them and endeavoured to prepare them for this event. He was now engaged in his final struggle, and his efforts to work upon them were infinite and unwearied. These efforts were sometimes direct, sometimes circuitous; he addressed himself by turns to their interests, their affections, and their reason; he tried to make them understand that the revolution which they had effected, and their own situation as well as his, would remain weak and precarious, so long as they should not have established themselves jointly in that frame of government on which all the laws of the country were founded, and to which all the habits of obedience and respect of the English people were attached. He convinced the reason or carried away the feelings of so many men, even among the officers of the army who were the longest recalcitrant, that he believed, and was justified in believing, himself sure of success. The proposition was carried through Parliament,

and the Crown officially offered to him. He adjourned his answer, in the hope of conquering the last remaining attempts at opposition. It was in the circle which immediately surrounded him, and especially among the generals most intimately attached to his person, that he met with resistance. It was insurmountable, being founded on sincere republican enthusiasm, on a feeling of shame at an act which would belie the whole tenor of their lives, and on the resentment of humiliated rivalry. Cromwell, flattering himself that these were but the humours of a few individuals, determined to take no heed of their opposition, and to place upon his head the crown which appeared within his grasp. At that very moment, however, he learned that a petition, drawn up by one of his chaplains and signed by a great number of officers, was solemnly presented, in the name of the army, to Parliament, calling upon it to remain faithful to the good old cause, and proclaiming the most decided hostility to the re-establishment of the monarchy. Cromwell immediately summoned the Parliament to Whitehall; and, expressing astonishment that they should affect to protest against his answer before it was given, formally refused the title of King.

He was a man of too clear and perspicacious a mind not to perceive the weakness and insecurity inherent in his position, and he strove to place it

on a foundation fortified by law and consecrated by time; but in vain. It was not the will of God that the man who had caused the death of his king and trodden under foot the liberties of his country, should reap the honour and the profit of restoring the Monarchy and the Parliament. In his struggles with the difficulties of his situation, Cromwell was successful against anarchy, but he constantly relapsed into despotism. He had rendered the civil administration of the country impartial; yet, urged by the necessity of finding resources for his government, he subjected the royalist party to the most iniquitous exactions, and the whole country to a military tyranny by which alone those exactions could be enforced. He boasted of having restored the regularity and the imposing splendour of the administration of justice; yet, when illustrious advocates defended the objects of his prosecutions, or when upright judges refused to condemn them contrary to law, he ill-treated, dismissed, and imprisoned those honourable men with a violence worthy of the worst times. To re-establish the legal monarchy, without renouncing revolutionary violence, was to attempt an impossibility. Cromwell already enjoyed a rare privilege; he had emerged from the chaos of revolution to the dictatorship; but the far higher honour of transforming the dictatorship into a government of law and liberty was denied him.



In this perilous trial he displayed a prudence which saved him. He persisted till the last moment, but he saw when persistence would be useless and dangerous, and he stopped. England, which had seen him draw back, and the Republicans, who had reduced him to that necessity, still wanted and still feared him. His position, therefore, remained intact, and he was not the less powerful as Protector because he had failed to make himself King. He did not abandon his design. He even took measures for convoking a new Parliament; doubtless promising himself that, as he had formerly subjugated the Parliament by means of the army, he should at some future time subjugate the army by means of the Parliament. But already the hand which was to crush his own iron nature lay heavy upon him. For some time past his health had been failing, and his illness was now aggravated by domestic sorrows, especially by the loss of his favourite daughter. He declined rapidly, but he struggled against death. The numerous trials he had triumphantly passed through, the great things he had done and had still to do, the urgent need of his presence, the force of his will—all contributed to persuade him that he had not attained the term of his life. He said among his most intimate friends, "I am sure I shall not die to-day—I know that God will not have me die yet." But God had formed

Cromwell to be a striking example to the world of what a great man can do—and of what he cannot do. His destiny was accomplished. By the sole might of his genius he had made himself master of his country, and of the revolution which he had let loose upon his country; he remained to his latest hour in full possession of his greatness; and he died, consuming his genius and his power in an ineffectual effort to restore what he had destroyed—a Parliament and a King.

---

In the anarchy into which England was thrown by his death, she enjoyed one of those rare felicities of which it is difficult to decide whether they are the immediate gift of Heaven, or are in part attributable to human wisdom. The termination of that anarchy was not factitious, incomplete, or precipitate. All the ambitions, pretensions, and other elements of political strife or chaos which Cromwell had kept down, started into fresh activity, and renewed their warfare on that scene which he had filled alone. His son Richard was proclaimed Protector without obstacle, and was even recognized without hesitation by foreign powers. But hardly had he attempted to govern, when he was pressed upon by a crowd of advisers, who were soon to become his enemies and his rivals:—by a

new and more popular council of the army under the title of a Council-general of Officers ; by the new Parliament, which he himself hastened to convoke ; by the old Long Parliament (or, as the people called it, the Rump), which asserted its exclusive claim to the legislative power, on the plea that it had been authorized by the King (whom it had put to death) to subsist till it should be dissolved by its own act ; and lastly, by the same Long Parliament, recruited with the members whom, before the King's death, it had driven from its body, and who now forcibly resumed the seats from which they had been forcibly expelled. These various phantoms of power aspired to fill the place of the master spirit by whom they had all been driven from the scene. During more than twenty months they appeared, vanished, and reappeared, in a hopeless confusion of coalitions and conflicts ; while not one of them, for a single day, acquired the consistency and force of government.

During this interregnum of twenty months, and in the midst of this ridiculous outbreak of chimerical pretensions, the only competitor who did not appear was he upon whom the thoughts, hopes, and fears of all England were fixed—the only one whose claims were serious. Two or three insignificant movements, which did not go beyond a demand for the convocation of a free Parliament, and in which the name of Charles Stuart was not

even mentioned, were attempted in his favour, but were repressed instantly and without a struggle.

It was the memory of Cromwell which even now held the royalist party in a state of fear and inaction. He had so often frustrated their hopes, and had crushed their plots and their risings with so rude a hand, that they had lost all confidence in the success of their projects. Moreover, their long reverses had taught them good sense. They had learned not to take their wishes for the measure of their powers; and to understand that, if Charles Stuart was to regain the crown, it could only be by the general will and act of England, not by an insurrection of Cavaliers.

Richard Cromwell really wished to put an end to the country's agitations and his own by treating immediately with the King. He was not deficient in sense or honesty, but he had neither ambition nor greatness of mind. His father's career and destiny, of which he had been a sharer, had excited in him a feeling of fatigue rather than of confidence. He did not believe in the recurrence of a similar success in his own case, nor did he feel himself capable of bearing a similar burthen. But neither was he a man to take a final and unalterable resolution in so weighty a matter. He was undecided and weak, overwhelmed with debts, and looking out on every side for the issue of what was pending. He continued the sport

of a fortune the vanity of which he felt, and the instrument of men inferior to himself in understanding.

Some solution of the present state of things was absolutely necessary. All the men of mark or influence who had brought about the revolution, or whom the revolution had raised into notice, had been repeatedly put to the proof. Though their attempts to govern the country had not been thwarted or obstructed by any external obstacle or national resistance, none of them had succeeded. They had destroyed each other. They had all exhausted in these fruitless conflicts whatever reputation or whatever strength they might otherwise have preserved. Their nullity was completely laid bare. Nevertheless, England was still at their mercy. The nation had lost, in these long and melancholy alternations of anarchy and despotism, the habit of ruling, and the courage to rule, its own destinies. Cromwell's army was still in existence, incapable of forming a government, but overturning every one that did not please it. It was a stranger to political parties, a soldier highly respected by the army, a faithful servant of the Parliament and Cromwell, and of even Richard Cromwell at his accession, who perceived that there was but one conclusion of this anarchy possible, and endeavoured to lead his wearied country to that goal without conflict and without convulsion. There was nothing

great in the character of Monk, but good sense and courage. He had no thirst for glory, no desire for power, no lofty principles or designs, either for his country or himself; but he had a profound aversion to disorder, and to those iniquitous excesses which popular parties clothe with fair promises. He was attached to his duties as a soldier and an Englishman, not ostentatiously, but with firmness and modesty. He was no charlatan and no declaimer; he was discreet even to taciturnity, and absolutely indifferent to truth or falsehood. He dissembled with imperturbable coolness and patience to bring about the result which seemed to him necessary to the welfare of England—the peaceable restoration of the only government which could be stable and regular. All the rest was, in his eyes, nothing more than a chaos of doubtful questions and party quarrels. He succeeded. All the fractions of the great monarchical party suspended their ancient animosities, their blind impatience and their conflicting claims, and united to support him. The Restoration came to pass like a natural and inevitable event, without costing either victors or vanquished a drop of blood; and Charles the Second, re-entering London in the midst of immense acclamations, could say with truth, “It is certainly my fault that I did not come back before, for I have seen nobody to-day who did not protest that he had always wished for my return.”

Never was government, old, new, or restored, placed in circumstances more favourable to regularity, strength, and stability.

Charles II. ascended the throne of his fathers without foreign aid, without intestine strife, and without even an effort of his own, by the mere spontaneous act of the English nation, which, freed from long oppression and anarchy and from revolutionary fluctuations, now looked to him alone for the restoration of law and order, and the establishment of a permanent and tranquil state of things.

The revival of the monarchy naturally followed upon the complete exhaustion and total ruin of its enemies and rivals. The Republic and the Protectorate had appeared and re-appeared under every form and in every combination which they could assume. All the men or the institutions which the revolution had brought to light were worn out and utterly discredited. The field of battle was deserted, and even the phantoms of the revolutionary combatants and pretenders had vanished.

Nor did royalty revive alone ; for while the King reascended his throne, the great landholders, the country gentlemen, and all the eminent citizens who had supported the royalist cause, resumed their former places in the government of the country.

The Republicans and the Protector had completely excluded them from all share in the business of the country, and their return to public life filled a great chasm in the social structure. It is the common error of the authors of revolutions to imagine that they can replace all that they destroy, and that they are competent to furnish resources for all the wants of the state. The English republicans had abolished the House of Lords, and driven the royalist party from the political stage; but they had not supplied their place as supports to authority against the assaults of anarchy, or as defenders of the liberties of the nation against the encroachments of despotism. The restoration not only re-established hereditary monarchy, but reinstated landed property, family traditions, and the most ancient and noble portion of the territorial aristocracy of the country, in their former rank and influence. The supreme power thus recovered its natural allies, together with its principle of stability; and political society, which had for eleven years been mutilated and unsteady, regained possession of every source of strength and re-established itself on all its durable foundations.

The restoration of the political government was accompanied by that of the religious establishment. The Episcopal Church arose with the Monarchy from her long subjection. The Church of England was called into existence by the voice, and fostered under the wing, of the temporal power; and it



is not to be denied that this, when compared with the purely spiritual origin and the steadfast independence of the Roman Catholic Church, has been a great source of weakness to her. But England has derived one great advantage from this defect in her Church; it put an end to all struggles between the ecclesiastical and civil government. Intimately united to the throne, whence she derived her strength and authority, the Church of England has been constantly and loyally devoted to it; and in spite of the stains on her origin and the weaknesses of her conduct, she has not been wanting in fervour of faith or purity of life, nor in courage and capacity in the accomplishment of her mission. She has had her heroes and her martyrs, unshaken on the scaffold or at the stake, though often weak and obsequious to royalty. At her restoration, in 1660, she had, for fifteen years, undergone every kind of persecution from the revolutionary party; spoliation, suppression of her worship, insult, imprisonment, poverty. She had borne them all with dignity and constancy. She arose from her abasement the object of ardent devotion to the royalist party, and of general respect to the people. She brought to the service of the restored monarchy tried fidelity and an authority heightened by her sufferings.

The dispositions of the English people coincided

with those of their church. The sects which she had long oppressed, and which had oppressed her in their turn, had indeed not ceased to be her bitter enemies; and the odious or ridiculous excesses of fanaticism and hypocrisy, instead of giving place to a wise and sincere piety, were soon followed by an inevitable reaction of impiety, frivolity, and cynical licentiousness. This, however, did not penetrate below the surface of society. While the court, and the classes most exposed to the infection of its influence, set an example of scandalous vice and impiety, the country was still peopled with sincere and fervent Christians; some of these had always been attached to the Church of England, or were reconciled to her by the evils and disorders which had succeeded her fall; others belonged to the dissenting sects, which the church began to persecute anew, with cruelty sufficient to inflame their zeal, but not to put an end to their existence. The mutual hatred and strife of the church and the dissenters had in some respects a salutary influence on both. They observed each other's conduct with vigilant jealousy; they mutually enforced a strict observance of the laws of God and a constant solicitude for the eternal interests of man, and their very differences kept alive the fervour and activity of their faith.

Thus, in the mass of the population, there was no want of moral foundations on which to build the

. . . .

restored monarchy; whilst in the classes naturally attached to power by taste and habit the throne found the political props necessary to its stability.

The only two formidable enemies which could counteract these propitious circumstances, and endanger the safety of the restored monarchy, were, the spirit of revolution and the spirit of reaction.

The revolutionary spirit, however thoroughly subdued, long survives its defeat, and even the experience of its impotence. Of the two revolutionary powers which had ruled England, the Republic and the Protector, the latter had completely disappeared; so completely, that his sons were allowed to die in peaceful oblivion in their own country. Though the republican party still subsisted, it attempted nothing (and, indeed, hoped nothing) for its own cause; but it ardently joined in all the animosities and plots against the monarchy; constantly seeking and as constantly finding rebels and martyrs in the persecuted sects, especially in those of Scotland. Even the parties who formed the constitutional opposition, and who cherished no republican regrets or desires, were still much influenced by revolutionary ideas and habits. The minds and hearts of the most enlightened among them were imbued with theories, and easily stirred by passions, incompatible with the patient struggles and necessary compromises of constitutional monarchy. The

most moderate weighed the chances, and approached the verge of fresh revolutions, with a facility utterly repugnant to any stable and legal order of things. The revolutionary poison, deadened but not expelled, still circulated in the veins of a large portion of the English nation, and kept it in a state of political fever which threw innumerable obstacles and perils in the way of power.

The reactionary spirit, the disease of conquering parties, incessantly exasperated the spirit of revolution. Not that we ought to listen to all the reproaches to this effect which history lavishes upon the Cavaliers and the Church of England. When revolutions which have long reigned unchecked are at length arrested in their course, their partisans demand, with singular arrogance, that the results of their past iniquities should remain untouched, and that nothing should be done or desired beyond the repression of their future attempts at mischief; every endeavour to repair the evil which they have inflicted, they call reaction. Among the measures adopted under the reign of Charles II. to redress the wrongs which the royalists, whether lay or ecclesiastical, had suffered during the revolution, many were only a natural and just restitution of violated rights. But both the rational policy of governments, and the well-understood interests of the injured parties themselves, prescribe limits to such acts of reparation. Injustice is not to be re-

paired by injustice, nor can revolutions be brought to a close by acts of provocation and vengeance. Reparation, when it appears vindictive, ceases to be regarded as just, and becomes a source of serious danger to the cause which it pretends to serve. The religious reaction under Charles II. was stained by these deplorable excesses: it was not the mere redress of the grievances and wrongs of the Church of England; it was a vindictive persecution of dissenters and a breach of faith towards the more moderate among them, to whom the king, at the moment of his return, had solemnly promised liberty of conscience. Charles made several attempts to keep his word, and to secure some toleration to the dissenters. Persecution was repugnant to his good sense, to the mildness of his temper, to his indifference in matters of religion, and to his secret leaning to the catholics. But his feeble and lukewarm velleities of justice soon gave way before the obstinacy of ecclesiastical hatred and the violence of popular passions; and the royalist party, in parliament and out of it, joined warmly in the work of persecution. The lay reaction which followed on the events of 1660 was brief and limited; but the religious reaction, though restrained for a moment, soon broke out with violence, became fiercer the longer it lasted, and was the source of most of the dangers, errors and crimes into which Charles and his government fell.

But these faults, however lamentable, did not in effect involve the monarchy in serious danger or threaten the safety of English society. The body of the nation was no longer possessed by the spirit of revolution, nor was it governed by the spirit of reaction. From the time of the great revolutionary crisis which lasted from 1640 to 1660, the English people had the good fortune to profit by experience, and the good sense not to give themselves up to extreme parties. In the midst of the most ardent political struggles, and of the violences into which they alternately urged and followed their leaders, they never failed, in critical and decisive circumstances, to remain or to fall back within the bounds of that steady good sense which consists in a clear recognition of the things which it is essential to preserve, and an unshaken adherence to them ; in enduring the inconveniences attached to these essentials, and renouncing whatever wishes or projects might endanger them. It is from the reign of Charles II. that this good sense, which is the political intelligence of a free people, has presided over the destinies of England. The revolution through which the English nation had just passed had terminated in three great results. They were as yet confused and incomplete, but they were irrevocable : and they were the only results essential to the wishes and the welfare of the people.

In the first place, the king could never again

separate himself from the parliament. The cause of monarchy was gained, but that of absolute monarchy was lost for ever. Theologians and philosophers, like Filmer or Hobbes, might preach the dogma or maintain the principle of absolute power, and their ideas might excite the indignation or the favour of speculative thinkers or vehement partisans. In the opinion of the nation, however, the question was practically decided: royalists and revolutionists regarded the close union and the mutual control of the crown and parliament as the right of the country, and as necessary to its interests.

In the second place, the House of Commons was in effect the preponderant branch of the parliament. Its direct or formal sovereignty was a revolutionary principle which was now generally decried and execrated; and the Crown and the House of Lords had recovered their rights and their dignity. But their overthrow had been so violent and complete, that, even after the fall of their enemies, they were unable to re-establish themselves in their ancient ascendancy; and neither the faults nor the reverses of the House of Commons could obliterate the effect of its terrible victories. The royalist party were now masters in that assembly, and, in its relations to the crown and the administration of the country, inherited the conquests of the Long Parliament. The confusion was inevitably long and often violent before the different parties (Tory or Whig, govern-

ment or opposition) learned to use these conquests with sense and moderation; to understand their import and their limits; and to maintain that elaborate harmony among the great powers of the state which is at once the merit and the difficulty of constitutional government. But through all the experiments of this apprenticeship, and in spite of some appearances of an opposite tendency, the preponderant influence of the House of Commons over the affairs of the country was, from the reign of Charles II., daily more obvious and decisive.

These two political facts were accompanied by one of still higher importance, relating to the religious condition of the country: the complete and definitive ascendancy of Protestantism in England was the other great result of the Revolution. Never, certainly, had a fiercer disunion prevailed among the English Protestants; and Bossuet might well exult in the contemplation of their divisions and quarrels. But a common faith and a common passion pervaded all these divergent sects: in the midst of their own combats, they joined with equal ardour in the common war against catholicism; and liberty of conscience, though incessantly violated and oppressed by them and among them, was, as against the Church of Rome, equally dear to each and the inalienable acquisition of all.

These were, indeed, the only objects which the great body of the English people had really at



heart, or earnestly demanded of that ancient monarchy whose return they hailed with transport; they were resolved to overlook or to endure the faults of a government which, whilst securing to them these three great and indispensable results of the revolution they had just passed through, preserved them from fresh convulsions. But this was precisely what neither Charles II. nor James II. was able or willing to accomplish.

In regard to politics, Charles II. had too much good sense and too much indifference to use any earnest endeavours to obtain absolute power. He cared for nothing but his pleasure, loved power only as a means of enjoyment, and willingly consented to concessions and compromises in order to ward off the risk of extreme struggles, or spare himself the annoyance of them. But in his inmost heart absolute monarchy was the only form of government which suited his taste or commanded his respect. He had not only witnessed the defects and excesses incident to the institutions of his own country, but had suffered under them. On the other hand, he had been a near spectator of the splendid court and the strong government of Louis XIV., and these were the objects of his admiration and his confidence. Hence arose the facility with which he fell into a venal dependence on the French monarch. He regarded him as the head of the great family of kings, and he did

not feel all the shame by which he ought to have been overwhelmed, when he sold him the policy and the liberties of his country.

In religion, Charles was at once sceptical and catholic; believing in nothing, and as corrupt in mind as in manners. But he thought that if, after all, there were any truth in religion, it was in that form of it taught by the Catholic Church, which afforded the surest refuge for kings against the perils of power, and, for the mass of mankind, against those of eternity.

Thus, though his conduct was not that of an absolute and catholic king, Charles was in his heart an absolutist and a catholic; his sympathies were with the sovereigns of the continent, and not with the faith and the policy of his own nation.

James II. was a catholic and an absolutist at heart, and his conduct was consistent with his conviction. He was also blindly enterprising, and persisted in his enterprises with all the obstinacy of a narrow and sterile mind, and the hardness of a cold and arid heart.

Such were the two princes whom the Restoration placed successively on the throne of England, in the midst of a nation which, though returning with joy to the ancient form of government and execrating the revolution, instinctively determined to hold fast by the important results it had gained.

The history of England, during the whole course

of the Restoration, is nothing else than the history of the profound discord which, though slowly revealed, broke forth at length between these two kings and their subjects; and of the persevering efforts of the English people to escape from the second revolution to which that discord naturally tended.

For England was during that period essentially conservative. She was agitated by the intrigues, the plots, and the insurrections excited by the violence of faction or the selfishness of ambition, and was more than once hurried away by the efforts of malcontents or the passions of the people into disturbances which seemed to threaten revolution. But far from seconding the men who sought to overthrow the monarchy of the Stuarts, she stopped and recoiled as soon as she saw that she was tending to that point. During the reign of Charles II. conspirators and insurgents were small fractions of the nation, and were disowned and deserted by it even when it seemed to favour them. As the faults of the restored monarch became more frequent and unpardonable, and his tendencies and designs more evident, the public discontent grew stronger, and the chances of a rupture between the sovereign and the country more imminent. But the country, far from availing itself eagerly of these chances, strove to evade them. To maintain the House of Stuart on the throne without surrendering its laws or its faith, the Eng-

lish nation made every sacrifice and every effort that the most patient and persevering conservatism could require.

All the phases through which the English Government passed during that period, with the conduct and destiny of all the parties and ministries who then wielded power, were but different forms and striking proofs of this great truth.

It was natural that the ancient royalist party, the faithful adherents and counsellors of Charles I. in misfortune, and of Charles II. in exile, should be the first possessors of power. Their leader was Clarendon, a man of firm, upright, and penetrating mind ; a sincere friend of legal and moral order ; a courageous defender of the constitution of his country, and a devoted adherent of her church ; full of respect for her rights, whether written or traditional, popular or monarchical. But he carried his hatred of the revolution to such a pitch, that he regarded everything new with suspicion and antipathy. As prime minister, he was haughty rather than high-minded ; he was deficient in largeness of thought and in warmth and generosity of heart ; he was ostentatious in the display of his greatness, and pedantically rigid in the use of his power. Towards the king, who regarded him with great confidence, and with an esteem mingled with some degree of attachment, he was by turns austere and humble ; passing from remonstrance to complaisance, speaking the

truth with the courage and firmness of an honest man, but alarmed at having spoken it, and seeking support against the court, yet not choosing to receive it from the Parliament. He tried to compel the Crown to respect the ancient laws of the country, and to keep the Commons within the humble limits which the older constitution had assigned to them; and he flattered himself that the royal prerogative might be restrained within the bounds of legality, without rendering it responsible to Parliament. He failed in this chimerical attempt to found a government neither arbitrary nor limited in a country just emerging from a popular revolution; and he fell, after seven years of ascendancy, hated by the Commons for his monarchical arrogance, by the dissenters for his high church intolerance, and by the court for his contemptuous austerity. He was pursued by the blind anger of the people, who reproached him with every public evil, as well as with every abuse of power; and was shamefully abandoned by the king, who now regarded him only as an inconvenient censor, and a minister dangerous to his own popularity.

Clarendon's fall has been attributed to the defects of his character, and to some mistakes or failures in his policy abroad and at home. Those who judge thus underrate the magnitude of the causes which determine the fate of eminent statesmen. Providence, which imposes so rude a task upon them,

does not regard a few weaknesses, failures, or errors with such inexorable rigour as to visit them with a total overthrow. Other great ministers, such as Richelieu, Mazarin, or Walpole, had as great defects as Clarendon, and committed faults at least as serious as his. But they understood the times in which they lived; the views and objects of their policy were in harmony with the wants, the condition, and the general tendency of the public mind. Clarendon, on the contrary, mistook the character of his age; he misconstrued the import of the great events which he had witnessed. He considered what had passed from 1640 to 1660 as a revolt, the suppression of which had left the government nothing to do but to re-establish law and order; he did not perceive that it was a revolution which had not only hurried the English people into fatal disorders, but had stamped a new political character on the country and imposed new rules of conduct on the restored monarchy. Amongst the great results which this revolution had bequeathed to England, Clarendon accepted with sincerity the indispensable concurrence of Parliament in the government of the country, and with joy, the triumph of Protestantism. But he obstinately rejected and opposed the growing influence of the House of Commons, and could not employ or even understand the means by which it might be made to ensure the safety, and add to the strength,

of the monarchy. This was one of those radical mistakes for which the rarest talents or even virtues cannot atone, and which render faults or reverses, otherwise unimportant, fatal to public men.

The honest counsellors of the late king were succeeded by the profligates of the new court. At their head were Buckingham and Shaftesbury ; the one licentious, witty, light, and presumptuous, the other ambitious, crafty, and bold ; both equally corrupt, and equally versed in the arts of corruption ; both ready to go over from the court to the populace, or from the government to a faction, whenever the apostacy would advance their fortune or gratify their vanity. They undertook to satisfy the Parliament, the dissenters, and all the popular feelings which the rigid and isolated policy of Clarendon had irritated. But the art of governing does not consist solely in anxiety to please or readiness to yield. The rash and immoral successors of Clarendon did not suspect the embarrassments and perils which they were about to bring upon the government and on themselves, by leaning on the House of Commons for their chief support. A popular assembly can only become the habitual instrument of a strong and regular government when it is itself strongly and regularly organized and governed ; and this can only be the case when it is divided into great parties, united by common interests and principles, and proceeding in a consistent and disciplined manner, under acknow-

ledged leaders, towards determinate ends. Now, such parties can only be formed and held together among men united by firm and enduring convictions. Faith in principles and fidelity to persons are the indispensable virtues and the vital conditions of great political parties; as great political parties are, in their turn, a condition of free government. Nothing of the kind existed, or was in process of formation, under Charles II., when the ministry, called the Cabal, attempted to govern in concert with the House of Commons and in obedience to its wishes. After so many convulsions and delusions, men (especially those in the regions nearest to power) were a prey to doubt and distrust, to a constant restlessness, and to a selfishness at one time impudently rapacious, at another, prudent even to pusillanimity. The House of Commons was filled with the wrecks of revolutionary parties, but there were no political parties able or worthy to sustain a government. Men like Buckingham and Shaftesbury were equally unable and unworthy to form such parties: they knew only how to gain over partisans for themselves from every camp and by every means. Their policy was shamelessly inconsistent and contradictory. They formed an intimate union between England and Holland, or abandoned Holland to Louis XIV., according as they happened to need the favour of the zealous English protestants or of the most powerful of foreign princes. They



granted toleration to dissenters from an apparent respect for the rights of conscience, but, in reality, from complaisance to the king, who wished to protect the catholics; then, under the pressure of the irritated House of Commons, they solicited the king to sanction the most rigorous measures against both catholics and dissenters. Their policy, whether domestic or foreign, was a series of tentatives and contradictions; their most equitable measures were only means of corruption and deception, insolently adopted and abandoned by turns, and as devoid of consistency as of truth.

The public, whether in or out of parliament, was sometimes the dupe of these stratagems. Nothing can equal the eagerness with which the many believe whatever flatters their passions, and the readiness with which they excuse every vice in the men who subserve them. The profligates of the Cabal sometimes enjoyed a momentary favour; but it was withdrawn almost as soon as given. Their licentious lives, the audacious immorality of their maxims, the versatility of their conduct, and the hollowness of their promises, shocked the conscience of the country, which, in the midst of all its errors, had still a solid groundwork of piety and virtue. It would most assuredly not have stopped short at indignation, had it known that its King, with the connivance of his principal counsellors, had concluded secret treaties with Louis XIV., by which he

engaged to declare himself catholic as soon as he could do so with any degree of safety ; and had sold, meanwhile, for a few millions, the political independence and the free institutions of his country. England long remained ignorant of these shameful acts ; but where a profound distrust prevails, the people, however ignorant, sometimes catch strange glimpses of truth from their presentiments. Though not aware of the degree to which the King's ministers had betrayed and degraded their country, the House of Commons not only withheld its confidence from them, but at length violently attacked them ; and they fell under the blows of a power, which, by using it as their instrument, they had themselves augmented, and without having made the smallest progress in organizing political parties in the parliament, or in regulating its action on the government.

Their successor Sir Thomas Osborne, afterwards Earl of Danby, had much more political wisdom, and exercised a greater influence on the development of the parliamentary system in England. Though he came into public life under the auspices of the Cabal, and early took part in some of their bad practices, he differed from them on one essential point—he belonged to the country and not to the court. As he was himself a Yorkshire gentleman, the country gentlemen of England constituted his party, and the House of Commons was his

political sphere. Being an ardent supporter of the cause and prerogative of the Crown, but entirely opposed to its severance from the Parliament, his great object was to form a permanent and compact party in the House of Commons. In furtherance of this he resorted to every variety of means; gaining over the minds of some by arguments, and the votes of others by money. He endeavoured to establish that intimate community of interests between the administration and its adherents, which, by uniting all the various elements of a party in one set of opinions and one line of policy, gives a strength and efficacy to government which nothing else can confer.

Danby understood and shared the national feeling of England, both as to religion and foreign policy. He was anxious for the security of Protestantism and the good understanding of the English government with the states devoted to that cause. He persuaded Charles II. to conclude a peace, and afterwards an alliance, with Holland, and to give his niece Mary in marriage to Prince William of Orange. While thus securing abroad a saviour of the faith and the liberties of his country, he laid at home the foundations of that great party attached to the Crown and the Church which has ever since given such strength to the English monarchy and so powerfully conduced to its stability.

Whilst the Tory party owed its organization to Danby's good sense and ability, his faults, by a fortunate coincidence of opposite results, occasioned the vigorous and salutary development of Whig principles. It is the glory of this party to have owed its origin and the first display of its greatness to its defence of the political liberty and morality of the country. It rose into being under the auspices of generous sentiments and noble principles; and it began to assume its peculiar physiognomy and its imposing character, in its struggles with Danby and his army of Cavaliers, transformed into Tories. These struggles were still confused and disorderly; but it was easy to distinguish in them two great parliamentary parties, aspiring to govern the country upon political principles which, though not radically opposed, were marked by real and important differences.

The conflict, which lasted some years, ended in the fall of Danby and the dissolution of the Long Royalist Parliament, which for eighteen years had upheld the royal cause with a singular mixture of devotedness, servility and independence. It was succeeded by a Whig ministry, composed of the leaders of that party, Temple, Russell, Essex, Hollis, Cavendish, and Powlet; and with the aid of a few moderate waverers, such as Halifax and Sunderland, and of Shaftesbury, the daring renegade from the court (but now the favourite of the people), this ministry

undertook the task of reforming and conducting the government.

It was a momentous crisis. For the first time, a parliamentary opposition, in spite of the resistance of the crown, was raised to power by public opinion and by the majority in the House of Commons. Would they be able to retain it? Would they be able to satisfy the real wishes of the country, without shaking the foundations of the monarchy, alarmed at their accession to power?

The Whigs did not succeed in solving this problem.

From want of experience, or from the influence of the false political theories which they had inherited from the revolutionary Long Parliament, their notions of their own organization and the conditions of constitutional government were confused, unpractical, wavering, and contradictory. Their prejudices were at once monarchical and republican. They tried to constitute the cabinet on a wide basis, and to render it a sort of intermediate body capable of checking the crown by means of the parliament, and the parliament by means of the crown:—a project so ill conceived that its immediate failure was inevitable. They carried the spirit of opposition into the exercise of power; and while servants of the throne, they were more anxious to restrain than to support its authority.

They lived amongst the remnants of the anarchi-

cal factions which had survived the revolution, and incessantly kept up a covert war against the monarchy. Revolutionary habits and passions had not totally disappeared with the republic. The republican party, though nearly annihilated in the higher classes, and too weak, even in the lower, to have any chance of success, still possessed unwearied agitators and implacable conspirators, ready to put their skill and their lives at the service of any one who would afford them a hope of gratifying their turbulent and vindictive passions. The Whigs, if they did not connive at these men, were in constant contact with them, and hoped to secure their services as partizans; but these professional revolutionists flattered themselves, on the other hand, that they should be able to convert their leaders into instruments. They continually compromised the ministers both with the king and the country, which was loyal in spite of its discontent, and decidedly averse to new revolutions.

To set against these faults in their conduct or these difficulties of their situation, the Whigs had one resource of which they made an ample and deplorable use—concessions to the passions of the multitude. England was at that time possessed by a general and ungovernable terror and hatred of popery. Suspecting on good ground that they were betrayed on this point by their king, the English people were hurried beyond all bounds

of reason, justice, or humanity. The political and judicial persecution of the Catholics was, during three years, the joint crime of a people furious in their faith, and a king cowardly in his infidelity. The Whigs as well as the Tories shared in this frenzy or yielded to it. It was moreover their ill luck to attain to power just as the first access of national fury against the Catholics began to subside, and to give place to some reaction in favour of justice and good sense. This reaction was therefore more injurious to them than to their rivals; and they had to sustain all the weight of the concealed anger of the king, who delighted to revenge himself on them for the iniquities which he had not had the courage to prevent.

Nor was their situation as to the foreign affairs of the country less complicated and insecure. Whilst they protested against the king's servile intimacy with the court of France, several of their leaders received favours or pensions from Louis XIV. Some accepted them from corruption (for there were profligates in the popular party as well as in that of the court); others, though men of the highest patriotism and honour, from the chimerical hope of employing the means of influence which they received from a foreign sovereign in securing the liberties of their own country. To seek abroad means of secretly acting on the internal affairs of a country, is a dangerous experiment; the ablest politicians run a great

risk of serving the designs of the foreigner rather than their own. The advantages which Louis XIV. derived from his connexion with certain Whig leaders were much greater than those which accrued to them from the secret support they received from him in effecting the overthrow of Danby and the dissolution of the Cavalier Long Parliament.

It was in the midst of these complicated embarrassments and perils that the Whigs conceived the design of changing the order of succession to the throne, and of setting aside the lawful heir by Act of Parliament. This was to make a revolution as yet uncalled for by any existing and patent necessity ; to anticipate remote contingencies, and to act upon conjectures, which, however well founded, were uncertain. The Whigs doubtless thought that in such a matter it was wiser to prevent than to wait ; and that it was better to accomplish at once by means of lawful deliberation, what must be effected later by force, and perhaps at the cost of a civil war. This was a very superficial view of the subject, and evinced little knowledge of human nature or the great conditions of social order. To deliberate on a revolution is more profoundly mischievous than to take a part in it ; and the political structure of society is more shaken by attacks on its fundamental laws in the name of reason, than by violations of them under the pressure of necessity.



The Whigs required parliament to abolish, at its mere pleasure, and before James II. had begun to reign, the hereditary right of that prince to the crown ; that is to say, they required it to alter the foundations of the monarchy, and to substitute its own will for a principle established by the constitution. The political tact of the nation warned it that this would be to destroy the monarchy ; the monarchical spirit rapidly revived, and divisions broke out in the cabinet itself. The Whigs lost all their allies among the moderate Tories, and found themselves reduced to the mere strength of their own party. They were also met by an obstacle they had little foreseen—the conscience of Charles II. Selfish as he was, he did not think himself justified in disposing of his brother's rights, and he defended them at all risks. To the honour of the English nation, popular passions yielded to the respect for constituted authorities ; the Bill of Exclusion, after passing the House of Commons, was thrown out by the Lords, and no attempt was made to push the thing further or to accomplish the same end by other means. But the question, though postponed, was far from being set at rest. The House of Commons which had voted the exclusion of James II. being dissolved, the bill was proposed and carried anew in that which succeeded it. Of the two great parties which had gradually arisen in the course of the reign, the Whigs were re-

solved to get rid of the future king, and the Tories to maintain the monarchy intact. Charles II. had also formed his determination; he dissolved the House of Commons, dismissed the Whigs, made up a ministry consisting exclusively of Tories, and governed for four years without a Parliament. During these four gloomy years, England constantly heard the approaching tempest muttering around her. The Whigs, once more in opposition, conspired for different objects and in different degrees. Some endeavoured to recover power by legal means; others, to force the king, even by insurrection and civil war, if needful, to yield to what they regarded as the right and the will of the nation. Some of the lower and more desperate hangers-on of the party were prepared to get rid of the King and his brother, whom they looked upon as the sole obstacles to the success of their cause, by assassination. These plots, sometimes exaggerated, sometimes misrepresented by an imperfect publicity or by judicial trials conducted with subtle wickedness, threw the country into troubles and distractions of opposite kinds. The conservative party was indignant, and was alarmed for the safety of the throne and the established order of things; the popular party was more and more exasperated at finding all its efforts vain, and its noblest leaders led to the scaffold. The destructive hostility to the monarchy provoked a monarchical reaction equally intense. The charters of

the principal corporations, the last rampart of the popular party, were attacked and abolished by form of law. The conspirators, discouraged by their failures and alarmed at their peril, left the country, and went over to Holland to conjure the Prince of Orange to save the Protestant faith and the liberties of England. The two great political results of the recent revolution to which England clung with tenacious attachment, namely, the influence of the parliament on the King's government, and the preponderance of the House of Commons in the parliament, were not only suspended, but endangered. The great religious result, the ascendancy of Protestantism, still remained intact ; it was the Church of England herself who invariably supported the crown and anathematized every attempt at resistance. The high Tories, with Rochester at their head, daily rallied more closely round James ; overlooking his attachment to the catholic church in their regard for his character of heir to the monarchy. But there was a third party, composed of moderate Tories and led by Halifax, who opposed violent measures, demanded the convocation of a parliament, and predicted extreme peril in the event of the government persisting in its refusal. Charles hesitated and procrastinated : promising to the high Tories an unshaken perseverance in maintaining his brother's rights ; to the moderate party, respect for the constitution of the country ; and to the

Church, the firm maintenance of the protestant establishment. Perplexed and fatigued, he employed all the address and prudence of which he was master, in eluding the necessity of choosing to which of these promises to adhere. He died before events compelled him to decide; but, having reached the term of his worldly career and the verge of eternity, the anxiety of the dying man overcame the precautions of the king; he rejected all the offers and entreaties of the Anglican bishops, sent for a Benedictine monk who was concealed in his palace, and died in the bosom of the Catholic Church—thus in his last moments confirming his brother in a faith, without the consolations of which Charles found it impossible to die.

During a reign of four years zeal for this faith had exclusive possession of James the Second's mind. His efforts to obtain absolute power were not the result of a strong character and despotic temper, nor of an ardent ambition; they were dictated by a dogged and intractable fanaticism. The infallibility and superiority to all control, which are the fundamental principles of the constitution of the Church of Rome, he regarded as maxims of government, no less than articles of faith. In his narrow and rigid mind, spiritual order was blindly confounded with temporal; and he thought himself entitled to exact from his subjects that absolute submission in the State which

he deemed it his own duty to yield in the Church.

From his infancy he had suffered oppression for his faith, and had seen those who shared it subjected to cruel persecutions. On his accession to the throne, he regarded the deliverance of the Catholic Church in England as his peculiar duty and mission, and he was incapable of understanding any other way of effecting her deliverance than by restoring her ascendancy.

Such is the lamentable concatenation of human errors and crimes! They provoke and produce each other in endless series. Instead of recognizing and respecting their reciprocal rights, protestants and catholics could only alternately persecute and enslave each other.

Either in the sincere hope of succeeding, or in the desire of guarding himself from all future reproach, James began by trying to govern according to the constitution. The day on which he ascended the throne, he promised to maintain the established laws of the Church as well as of the State; and this promise he solemnly repeated to the parliament which he shortly after convoked.

Some important though isolated acts, however, soon belied these professions. He continued to levy taxes which had not been voted by Parliament; and whilst he redoubled his severity against the dissenters, with a view to conciliate the Church of

England, he began to suspend the execution of the laws against the catholics, and to make serious inroads on the political and religious constitution of the state.

His language was still more alarming than his acts. While professing the legality of his intentions, he continually betrayed a sense of his right to absolute power, and his resolution to enforce it if the country did not gratefully acknowledge his moderation.

Kings and their subjects are equally fond of displaying to each other the sword of Damocles suspended over their heads; the former, in the name of divine right; the latter, in that of the sovereignty of the people. The menace is as insane as it is insolent, since it inevitably enfeebles the powers of the government, or endangers the liberties of the country. The true wisdom and policy of both kings and their subjects are the same; to claim nothing beyond their lawful rights, and to bury in silence the mysteries and the menaces of arbitrary power on the one hand, and of revolution on the other.

James's promises and first acts of constitutional government were received by the country with favour and almost with enthusiasm. The more lively are men's fears, the more eager are their hopes. The Tories had a decided majority in the Parliament. The Church of England strove to hold the King to the engagements he had formed

with her, by increased demonstrations of loyalty and devotedness to his person. The dissenters thought they had some chances of toleration and liberty. Good dispositions and evil ones, motives honourable and shameful, conspired to secure to the King the patient, nay almost the servile, submission of the country. At court and in the parliament, the greater number of the leading men were so sceptical and corrupt, that they were ready to make indefinite sacrifices of their opinions and their honour. In the nation, a feeling of lassitude, which was still profound, concurred with the monarchical spirit and religious discipline to repress any explosion of discontent or alarm. James was no longer young; his two daughters, sole heirs to the throne, were firmly attached to the protestant faith; it was better to endure for a time evils and perils, the term of which was certain, than to incur the risks of new revolutions.

The more violent factions, the conspirators by profession, the men of desperate ambition, and the exiles who had taken refuge in Holland, did not show the same patience and resignation. In spite of the advice of the Prince of Orange, who restrained while he protected them, they attempted two simultaneous insurrections; the one in England, under the Duke of Monmouth, the other in Scotland, under the Duke of Argyle. These risings produced a great agitation in the nation; but though a

strong sympathy with the insurgents spread rapidly amongst the lower classes, it did not break out in active demonstrations. While the Tories vigorously aided the King to suppress the rebellion, the Whigs gave it no support. Both these attempts failed, and both their leaders expiated them on the scaffold. Though their fate excited the public commiseration, neither their personal qualities nor their views awakened any strong national sentiment. But an appearance of success is fatal to a weak prince engaged in a struggle with his people. James, triumphant over his enemies and obeyed by his subjects, gave himself up to the vices of his nature. He delighted in the rigid and even cruel exercise of his power, and he found in Jeffreys an undaunted and shameless minister of his vengeance. The inhuman proceedings against the partisans of Argyle and Monmouth, though clothed with the forms of justice, evinced an equal contempt for the guarantees of law and the feelings of humanity; and they excited in the public, whether high or low, whether favourable or hostile to the insurrection, the deepest indignation and disgust. James now gave a free course to his designs. He assailed the Church of England in its vital privileges, and the most faithful of his protestant servants in the inmost recesses of their consciences. The universities of Oxford and Cambridge received orders to place Catholics at the head of Protestant esta-



blishments. The king declared with his own lips to Rochester, that if he did not turn catholic he would be deprived of all his employments. Measures so evidently illegal and extreme found opponents even among the Catholics. These were divided into two parties, the one prudent, the other violent, who carried on a constant struggle for influence over the king. The former pointed out to him the dangers into which he was rushing, the latter, the great object on which his hopes were fixed; thus restraining or stimulating his fanaticism by turns. Nothing, therefore, was wanting that could enlighten or guide James; neither the loyalty and the long patience of the Protestants, nor the moderation and the wise counsels of the more moderate Catholics. But his blind and sincere obstinacy was proof against all representations. He officially raised Father Petre, a Jesuit, to a place in his Privy Council; and he ordered the clergy of the Established Church to read from every pulpit in the kingdom, the declaration by which he abolished, in virtue of his sole power, the acts of Parliament against Dissenters and Catholics. The Archbishop of Canterbury and six bishops having refused to execute this order, and having presented a remonstrance to the king, he caused them to be arrested, taken to the Tower, and tried before the Court of King's Bench as authors of a seditious libel.

Just at this time, a son, whose birth, being con-

trary to the expectations of all England, was, regarded with groundless but natural suspicion, was born to James. The dominant faction loudly proclaimed their joy at this event; and betrayed their hope of training the son in their own principles, and of governing him as they had governed his father. There was now no apparent end of the despotism which had hitherto been tolerated in consideration of its short duration.

Still there was no violent outbreak, and the country remained motionless; but its leading men changed their resolutions. The Church of England, goaded to extremity, entered on a system of positive resistance; the political parties, Whigs and Tories, concurred in a more decisive step. The Whigs had been taught by experience that they alone could neither rally the nation nor establish a government. Their conspiracies had been as unsuccessful as their cabinets. They had now the rare wisdom to perceive that they were of themselves insufficient to accomplish their own designs, and that an intimate union with their former adversaries was the only means of securing their success. The Tories, on the other hand, saw that every principle has its limits, every engagement and every duty its conditions. For forty years they had upheld the maxims of non-resistance to the Crown, and observed a punctilious fidelity to their kings. Placed in new circumstances, and subjected to a new trial,

they felt that their country too had a claim on their fidelity; and that they were not bound by consistency to make a servile surrender of their liberties and faith to a prince inaccessible to reason. The most eminent men of both parties, Russell, Sidney, and Cavendish for the Whigs, Danby, Shrewsbury, and Lumley for the Tories, laid aside their divisions and determined to act in concert. Halifax, the leader of the intermediate party, when sounded by them, declined all active participation in their design, but did not dissuade them from it.

On the 30th June, 1688, at the very moment when the solemn acquittal of the Seven Bishops filled London with enthusiastic acclamations, Admiral Herbert, disguised as a common sailor, set out for Holland, bearing to the Prince of Orange a formal invitation to come to the succour of the faith and laws of England, and a solemn engagement to support him at all risks and by every means in their power. These documents were signed by the six leaders of the two great political parties, and by Compton, Bishop of London.

William only awaited this step. "Now or never," said he to his confidant, Dykevelt, when he heard of the trial of the Seven Bishops, and of their inflexible resistance. As soon as he received the message, he announced his intention with a bold and dexterous mixture of frankness and reserve, and

publicly prepared to execute it. He did not go, he said, to conquer a kingdom, or to usurp a throne; he went at the request of the English people themselves, to interpose between their king and his subjects, and to protect the laws of England and the Protestant religion from the dangers that threatened them. He discussed the expediency of the undertaking with the States General of Holland, and asked their opinion and assistance. He informed not only the Protestant princes, who sympathized with him as the champion of their common faith, but the Emperor of Germany and the King of Spain, who regarded him as the defender of the European balance of power. Never was enterprise of the kind thus avowed, debated, explained, and justified beforehand. The whole of Europe knew it, and understood what was impending. Personal ambition and treasonable conspiracy disappeared in the political greatness of the cause and the event. Less than four months after the arrival of the joint message from the Whigs and Tories, William embarked for England at the head of a squadron and an army: bearing with him the secret good wishes of most of the sovereigns of Europe, Protestant or Catholic, and even of Pope Innocent XI., who had conceived a lively resentment at the haughty demeanour of Louis XIV., and a profound contempt for the insane temerity of James II.

James alone neither understood nor believed what was passing. In vain did he receive from Louis XIV. accurate intelligence, and the offer of efficient help; in vain did his own agents at the Hague and at Paris send him accounts of the preparations and the progress of the enterprise. He rejected all proposals, and shut his eyes to all information. He had still so much of English and kingly pride left as to be unwilling to be publicly defended by the soldiers of a foreign king, whose subsidies he had secretly accepted without blushing. His seeming temerity was the offspring of secret fear, and the feeling of his own impotence made him turn away from the aspect or the thought of danger. His presentiments did not deceive him. More than six weeks elapsed between William's landing on the coast of England and his triumphal entry into London. He advanced slowly through the country, awaiting those who would resist, or those who might join him: but no resistance was offered; not an effort was made, not a drop of blood was shed, in defence of James. No less abject in the presence of danger than he had been obstinate in refusing to foresee it, he tried to regain by weakness what he had lost by temerity; he retracted all he had done, granted all he had refused; he restored to the cities their charters, to the universities their privileges, and to the bishops his favour. He dismissed Father Petre

from his council, and attempted to negotiate with William. His meanness was as unavailing as his temerity had been impotent. Shut up in his palace, he daily learned some fresh defection of his generals or counsellors. His daughter, the Princess Anne, escaped to the head-quarters of the Prince of Orange. Whitehall had become a solitude, and was likely soon to become a prison. James fled in his turn, but was recognized and brought back to London by the mob. After a few more days passed in useless perplexities, he escaped again, and for ever. On the 18th December, 1688, he had hardly quitted London three hours, when six regiments of cavalry, English and Dutch, entered the capital, with colours flying, in the name of the Prince of Orange. William himself, shunning as much by taste as by prudence all appearance of triumph, arrived in the evening of the same day at St. James's Palace; and five weeks afterwards, on the 22nd of January, 1689, a parliament, extraordinarily convoked under the name of a Convention, met at Westminster to sanction and settle the new order of things.

In this assembly, the differences which had been suppressed during the common danger, broke forth anew. The monarchical scruples of the Tories, and the innovating notions of the Whigs, once more manifested themselves in all their force. It was said by the more timid of the former, that the wisest course

would be to recall King James, after compelling him to grant fresh guarantees. The more vehement of the Whigs spoke of founding a republic governed by a council of state, of which the Prince of Orange should be President. Between these extremes floated the moderate opinions, which also were divided and unsettled. Many of the Whigs, who, though they had no intention of overthrowing the monarchy, were still deeply imbued with the maxims of the Long Parliament, wished to depose King James, and to defer offering the crown to William till republican institutions should have been organized under monarchical forms. The Tories, who were warmly attached to the Church of England, demanded that James should be declared incapable of reigning, but that the foundations of the monarchy should be left untouched, and the government placed in the hands of a regency. Others, more bold, agreed with the Whigs that James, by his conduct and his flight, had abdicated; but, under the influence of scruples suggested by their monarchical principles, they maintained that the throne, which could not be vacant for a single moment, descended, by this mere act, to his eldest daughter, the Princess Mary, and that nothing remained to be done but to proclaim her Queen. These various schemes, as soon as they were promulgated, were explained, discussed, and criticised with ardour by the people

as well as in the two Houses; the public mind became heated, and parties arrayed themselves against each other; the ambitious unfurled the banner under which they hoped to rise to fortune and distinction; divisions broke out between the Lords and the Commons; and the Revolution, though hardly accomplished, was already in jeopardy.

But the same rare political good sense which had united the leaders of parties in a common resistance, guided them through the difficulties incident to a new government. They dismissed all absolute theories and all questions of no practical utility; they reduced the acts and the terms by which the new power was to be settled, to what was strictly necessary to give it a solid foundation; and they were only anxious to bring affairs as speedily as possible to a conclusion which might satisfy the higher and middling classes of the country. William, at first by his reserve and afterwards by his firmness, efficiently seconded the wisdom of the party leaders. He left a perfect latitude to every system and every project; betraying neither his wishes nor aversions, and keeping himself aloof from all debates. But when he felt the crisis approaching, he assembled the most considerable men of the two Houses, and declared to them in simple and brief language, which admitted of no reply, that though he was full of respect for the



rights and liberties of the Parliament, he, too, had liberties and rights, and would never accept a mutilated power nor a throne on which his wife would be placed above him. This step was decisive: the two Houses came to an agreement; a declaration was adopted, proclaiming the vacancy of the throne, the fundamental rights of the English people, and the elevation of William and Mary, Prince and Princess of Orange, to the throne of England. On the 13th of February, 1689, the official proclamation of the Act of Parliament was hailed with acclamations in all the principal parts of London.

Nor was this rare combination of prudence, union, and power, more than the exigencies of the case demanded; for such is the inherent vice of all revolutions, that even the most lawful, the most necessary, and the most generally approved, causes a profound disturbance in the community which it saves from worse evils, and yields results which are long insecure and precarious.

Hardly more than two or three years had passed when William, the deliverer of England, was already unpopular. His simple but haughty deportment, his cold taciturnity, his distaste for the manners of the English aristocracy (which he took no pains to conceal), the exclusive intimacy and lavish favours which he bestowed on a few old friends who had accompanied him from Holland,

all conspired to make him a stranger, and not an agreeable one, in the midst of his new people. In all that regarded civil and religious liberty he was far more enlightened than the English, and was not at all inclined to be made the instrument of episcopal intolerance or of rival aristocratic parties. He had little respect for the exigencies of constitutional government, and, indeed, did not understand the working of parliamentary parties, which at that time were confused and ill-organized ; he was shocked at their selfishness and jealous of their power, and sometimes defended his own with more vigour than discernment. The general policy of Europe was the great, and almost sole object of his thoughts and government. He had aspired to the throne of England mainly that he might have all her strength at his disposal in his struggle against the domination of Louis XIV. ; and the protestant passions of the English people powerfully seconded his designs. But William involved England in the affairs and wars of the continent more than was agreeable to the habits, tastes, or interests of her people. She was weary of being engaged in efforts and dangers for distant objects by the prince whom she had invited to free her from intestine dangers ; and he, in his turn, was indignant at finding in the people and the parties whom he had delivered on their own soil, so little ardour and devotedness for the great cause to which their

safety and their freedom were, in his eyes, so manifestly attached. From these causes arose those misunderstandings, heart-burnings and conflicts between the King and the country which disturbed and shook the new government. William was conscious of his strength, and used it haughtily; he even went so far as to say that he would abdicate and return to Holland, if he were not better understood and more vigorously supported. When the danger became urgent, the Parliament, the political parties throughout the country, the church, and the people felt how necessary William was to them, and made the liveliest demonstrations of attachment to him. But their mutual disgusts soon recurred; the parties returned to their rivalries; the people to their prejudices and their ignorance; the king to his European policy, his war expenditure, and his captious tenacity of power. The hopes of the Jacobites revived: though beaten in Ireland and Scotland, and discovered and condemned in England, they laid fresh plots and renewed their attempts to excite a civil war. Even in William's privy council, James had correspondents who thus endeavoured to secure themselves against possible contingencies. Notwithstanding the easy success of the revolution, the firm character of the king, and the sincere consent of the country, the government established in 1688 was, during the whole course of this reign, continually assailed and continually tottering.

Similar evils subsisted in the reign of Queen Anne. The Whigs and Tories, more and more widely severed, carried on a furious contest for power. In the European struggle for the Spanish succession, the two parties were at first united in pursuing King William's policy of intervention and continental war : but the Whigs, led partly by a spirit of routine and partly by the intoxication of success, wished to carry this policy far beyond the limits of moderation or expediency ; whilst the Tories espoused the cause of peace, which was ardently desired by the people and favoured by the Queen. By the treaty of Utrecht they put an end to the uneasy and precarious situation of Europe. But the Tories being nearly connected with the Jacobites, and the Queen, in spite of her fidelity to protestantism, beginning to feel a revival of attachment to her family, domestic intrigues were mingled with foreign complications, and the banished Stuarts had some reason to imagine that they had yet a chance of recovering the throne. The settlement of 1688 appeared to be once more called in question ; but the death of Queen Anne and the peaceful accession of the House of Hanover established it on a solid basis. Under the reigns of George I. and George II. the public mind took another direction ; foreign politics ceased to occupy it ; the internal administration of the country, the maintenance of peace, questions of finance, colonies, and commerce, and the develop-

ment and the contests of parliamentary government, became the predominant and absorbing interests of the government and the country. The revolutionary and dynastic questions were not, however, wholly extinct: the English nation had no affection for German princes, who did not speak their language and did not like their habits; who eagerly seized on any pretext to quit the country and to visit their small hereditary state; and who continually involved them in continental squabbles to which the English attached no importance and no interest. The domestic quarrels and the coarse licentiousness of the royal family offended the country. The vacillating rule, the selfish rivalries, the exaggerations and the intrigues of the parliamentary parties shocked its integrity and its good sense. In Scotland, Ireland, and even in England, Jacobite insurrections were pertinaciously renewed; but though they always found enthusiastic adherents, they were always repressed, and ceased to excite in the country any vehement fear or antipathy. These continual attacks on the established order of things naturally produced a general indifference and inertness, a disaffection to authority, and a disposition to criticise its conduct; the public seemed to fall away from a power for which it no longer cared. Fifty-seven years after the burst of national enthusiasm which had placed William III. on the throne, the grandson of James II., at the head of a body of

Scotch Highlanders, penetrated unresisted into the very heart of England; and people began to ask whether he would not enter London in a few days, as easily as William had done when he drove out this same Pretender's grandfather.

But the fate of England and its government were not left to be determined by a fit of popular ill humour, the defeat of a few regiments of soldiers, or the daring enterprise of a few factious men. The same social force which, in 1688, had accomplished the Revolution, defended and saved, in 1745, the government which it had founded. As soon as the danger became evident, the enemies of that government were encountered by the strong organization of aristocratic parties, and by the good sense of a people politically disciplined and deeply imbued with the Christian faith. The Whig leaders and many of the Tories considered their honour and their political fortune bound up with this cause. The parties were faithful to their leaders. The middle classes and the public at large forgot their discontents and disgusts, and the small hold of the government on their personal sympathy, and thought only of the welfare of the country and their own true interests. The church and the dissenters were animated by a common loyalty. Opposed by this intelligent union of the aristocracy with the people, and of the political with the religious spirit, the triumph of the Jacobites

was as short-lived as it had been sudden. The greatest peril which the newly-constituted monarchy of England ever incurred was also the last. From that time some secret plot, some attempt no sooner conceived than frustrated, has occasionally shown that it still had enemies. It was not till after seventy years of laborious and painful trials that the government established in 1688 overcame the vices inherent in every revolution and acquired undisputed sway in England. In 1760, when George III. ascended the throne, it was firmly consolidated. By what means and at what cost this great work had been completed, appears from the preceding relation.

---

A people who can understand and act upon the counsels which God has given it in the past events of its history, is safe in the most dangerous crises of its fate. England had learned from her former trials, that a revolution is an immense and incalculable disorder, which entails on society great evils, great perils, and great crimes; a disorder which a rational people may be compelled to undergo, but which they will dread and repel until it is forced upon them by an imperious necessity. In her new trials, England did not forget this lesson. She endured much, she struggled long, to avoid

another revolution ; nor did she resign herself to it till she saw no other way of saving her rights, her honour, and her faith. It is the glory of the Revolution of 1688 and the main cause of its success, that it was an act of mere defence and of necessary defence.

Whilst this revolution was defensive in principle, it aimed at precise and limited objects. In great political and social convulsions, a fever of boundless and impious ambition sometimes seizes upon society ; men think themselves entitled to lay hands upon everything, and to remodel the world at their will. These vague and presumptuous schemes of human creatures treating the great and complex system in which their place is marked out as if it were a chaos, and striving to exalt themselves into creators, are as impotent as they are insane ; the utmost that they can do is, to throw all that they touch into the confusion of their own delirious dreams. England did not fall into this wild error. Instead of aspiring to alter the foundations of society and the destinies of mankind, she asserted and maintained her religion and her positive laws and rights ; and did not carry her claims or even her desires beyond the limits which they prescribed. With a singular mixture of magnanimity and discretion, she accomplished a revolution which gave to the country a new head and new guarantees, but which stopped short with the attainment of those objects.



This great change was not brought about by popular risings; but by political parties organized long before the revolution, with a view to the settlement of a regular government, and not in a revolutionary spirit. Neither the Tory party, nor that of the Whigs (spite of the revolutionary elements which mingled in it), had been formed for the purpose of overthrowing established institutions. They were parties occupied with constitutional politics, not with conspiracy and revolt. Although they were led by imperious circumstances to change the government of their country, the design was foreign to their character and principles; and they returned with little effort to those habits of order and obedience which they had abandoned for a moment, not from taste or levity, but from necessity.

Nor was the merit or the burthen of the revolution limited to either of the great parties which had so long been opposed in opinion. They brought it about in concert and by mutual concessions. It was imposed on both by a common necessity, and was not, to either, a victory or a defeat. Though watching its approach with widely different sentiments, both saw it to be inevitable, and shared in its accomplishment.

It has often been said in France, and even in England, that the Revolution of 1688 was exclusively aristocratic; that it was planned and achieved by the higher classes for their own advantage, and

was not accomplished by the impulse or for the good of the people.

This is a remarkable example, among many others, of the confusion of ideas and the ignorance of facts which so often characterize the judgments passed on great events.

The two political changes effected by the Revolution of 1688 are the most popular to be found in history; it proclaimed and guaranteed, on the one hand, the essential rights common to all citizens, and on the other, the active and effectual participation of the country in its own government. A people so ignorant of its highest interests, as not to know that this is all which it needs, or ought to demand, will never be able to found a government or to maintain its liberties.

Considered from a moral point of view, the Revolution of 1688 had a still more popular character; since it was made in the name and by the force of the religious convictions of the nation, and was designed principally to give them security and ascendancy. In no country, and at no time, were the form and destiny of the government more powerfully influenced by the prevalent faith of the governed.

The Revolution of 1688 was popular in its principles and results, and was aristocratic only in the mode of its execution; the men of weight and mark in the country by whom it was conceived, pre-

pared, and carried through, being the faithful representatives of the general interests and sentiments. It is the rare felicity of England, that powerful and intimate ties were early formed, and have been perpetuated, among the different classes of society. The aristocracy and the people living amicably, and deriving prosperity from their union, have sustained and controlled each other. The natural leaders of the country have not held themselves aloof from the people, and the people have never wanted leaders. It was more especially in 1688 that England experienced the benefit of this happy peculiarity in her social order. To save her faith, her laws and her liberties, she was reduced to the fearful necessity of a revolution; but she accomplished it by the hands of men disciplined in habits of order and experienced in government, and not by those of revolutionists. The very men who were the authors of the change, contained it within just limits, and established and consolidated the institutions to which it gave birth. The cause of the English people triumphed by the hands of the English aristocracy: this indeed was the great characteristic of the Revolution, and the pledge of its enduring success.

---

George III. had been seated on the throne sixteen years, when, at fourteen hundred leagues from his capital, more than two millions of his subjects broke the ties which bound them to his throne, declared their independence, and undertook the foundation of a Republic. England was compelled, after a contest of seven years, to recognise the independence of the United States of America, and to treat with them upon equal terms. Sixty-seven years have since elapsed; and, without any violent effort or extraordinary event, these United States, by the mere development of their institutions and of the prosperity which is the natural attendant on peace, have taken an honourable place among great nations. Never was an ascent to greatness at once so rapid, so little costly at its origin, or so little troubled in its progress.

It is not merely to the absence of any powerful rival, or to the boundless space open to their population, that the United States of America have owed this singular good fortune. Their rapid and tranquil rise is not the mere result of such happy accidents as these, but is in a great degree a consequence of moral causes.

They rose to the position of an independent state under the banner of law and justice. Their revolution, like that of England, was strictly defensive. The guarantees which they claimed and the principles which they asserted were inscribed

in their charters. They were the same which the English parliament, with far greater violence and disorder than were now occasioned by the resistance of the colonies, had triumphantly claimed and asserted in the mother-country.

The great and perilous enterprise in which they engaged was not strictly a revolution. Before they could conquer their independence, they had to go through a war with a formidable enemy, and to construct a central government of their own, in the place of the distant power whose yoke they were endeavouring to throw off: but in respect of their local political institutions and their private law, they had no revolution to make. Each of the colonies was already in the enjoyment of free institutions as to its internal affairs; and when it became an independent state, little change was necessary or desirable in the principles and structure of its existing government. Attachment to ancient laws and manners, and affectionate reverence for the past, were the general sentiments of the people. The colonial administration of a distant monarchy, was easily transformed into a republican administration under a federation of states.

Of all forms or modes of government, the republican is unquestionably that to which the general and spontaneous assent of the country is the most indispensable. An absolute monarchy founded by violence, is conceivable; and indeed such have ex-

isted. But a popular government forced upon a people in despite of its sentiments and wishes, is an absurdity at which common sense and justice revolt. In their transition to the republican form of government the Anglo-American colonies had no such difficulty to surmount; it was the full and free choice of the people; and in adopting it, they did but accomplish the national wish, and develope, instead of overturning, their existing institutions.

Nor was the perturbation in the social order greater than that in the political. There was no conflict between different classes, nor any violent transfer of influence from one order of men to another. Though the crown of England had still partisans in the colonies, their attachment to it had no connexion with their position in the social scale. The wealthy and important families were in general the most firmly resolved on the conquest of their independence and the foundation of a new system; and it was under their direction that the people acted, and that those objects were accomplished.

The opinions and feelings of men in regard to religion and morals underwent as slight a revolution as their social condition. The philosophical ideas and the moral and religious scepticism prevalent in the eighteenth century, had obtained some circulation in the United States; but even the

minds which they had infected were not thoroughly imbued by them ; their fundamental principles and ultimate consequences were not understood or accepted : the moral gravity and the practical good sense of the old Puritans survived in most of the American admirers of the new French philosophy. The mass of the population remained as warmly attached to its religious creed as to its political liberties. Whilst rebelling against the King and the Parliament of England, they were submissive to the will of God and the precepts of the Gospel ; and whilst struggling for emancipation, they were governed by the faith which inspired their forefathers, when they sought the New World and founded the communities which were now rising into independent states.

The ideas and passions of the modern partisans of democracy, which now convulse and disorganize society, have an extensive and powerful sway in the United States, and there, as elsewhere, are pregnant with contagious errors and destructive vices. Hitherto they have been controlled and purified by Christianity, and by the sound political traditions, and strong habits of spontaneous obedience to law, which, in the midst of nearly unlimited freedom, govern the population. In spite of the anarchical principles which are boldly proclaimed on this vast theatre, principles of order and conservation maintain their ground, and exercise

a powerful influence over society and individuals; their presence and their power are felt, even by the party which emphatically styles itself democratic; insensibly moderating its actions, and often saving it from its own intemperance. To these tutelary principles which presided over its origin, the American revolution owed its success. May Heaven grant that in the midst of the formidable conflict which they have now to sustain, they may continue to guide this powerful people, and to warn them in time of the precipices which lie so near their path!

Three illustrious men, Cromwell, William III., and Washington, are the prominent and characteristic figures in the history of the critical events which determined the fate of two mighty nations. For extent and force of natural talents, Cromwell perhaps is the most remarkable of the three. His mind was wonderfully inventive, supple, prompt, firm, and perspicacious, and he possessed a vigour of character which no obstacle could daunt, and no conflict weary. He pursued his designs with an ardour as exhaustless as his patience, through the slowest and most tortuous, or the most abrupt and daring ways. He excelled equally in winning and in ruling men by personal and familiar intercourse; he displayed equal ability in leading an army or a party. He had the instinct of popularity and the gift of authority, and he let



loose factions with as much audacity as he subdued them. But, born in the midst of a revolution, and raised to sovereign power by a succession of violent convulsions, his genius, from first to last, was essentially revolutionary; and even when taught by experience the necessity of order and government, he was incapable of either respecting or practising the immutable moral laws which are the only basis of government. Owing to the faults of his nature, or the instability of his position, he wanted regularity and calmness in the exercise of power; had instant recourse to extreme measures, like a man pursued by the dread of mortal dangers, and, by the violence of his remedies, perpetuated or even aggravated the evils which he sought to cure. The establishment of a government is a work which requires a more regular course, and one more conformable to the eternal laws of moral order. Cromwell was able to subjugate the revolution which he had so largely contributed to make, but not to build up a government in the place of that which he had subverted.

Though less powerful than Cromwell by nature, William III. and Washington succeeded in the undertaking in which he had failed; they fixed the destiny and consolidated the institutions of their respective countries. Even in the midst of revolution they never adopted a revolutionary policy. Power gained by anarchical violence

generally entails on its possessor the necessity of using despotic violence in its defence. But these two great men were naturally placed, or placed themselves, in the regular ways and under the permanent conditions of government.

William was an ambitious prince. It is puerile to believe that, up to the moment of the appeal sent to him from London in 1688, he had been insensible to the desire of mounting the throne of England, or ignorant of the schemes which had long been laid for raising him to it. William followed the progress of these schemes step by step; though he took no part in the means, he did not reject the end; and, without directly encouraging, he protected its authors. His ambition was ennobled by the greatness and justice of the cause to which it was attached; the cause of religious liberty and of the balance of power in Europe. Never did man make a vast political design more exclusively the thought and purpose of his life than William did. The work which he accomplished on the field or in the cabinet was his passion; his own aggrandizement was but the means to that end. Whatever were his views on the crown of England, he never attempted to realize them by violence and disorder. To his well-regulated and lofty mind the inherent vice and degrading consequences of such means were obvious and revolting. But when the career was opened to

him by England herself, he did not suffer himself to be deterred from entering on it by the scruples of a private man ; he wished his cause to prevail, and he wished to reap the honour of the triumph. Rare and glorious mixture of worldly ability and christian faith, of personal ambition and devotion to public ends !

Washington had no ambition ; his country wanted him to serve her, and he accepted greatness from a sense of duty rather than from taste ; sometimes even with a painful effort. The trials of his public life were bitter to a man who preferred the independence of a private condition and tranquillity of mind to the exercise of power. But he undertook, without hesitation, the task which his country imposed on him, and, in fulfilling it, he made no concessions that could lighten its burthen either to the country or to himself. He was born to govern, though he had no delight in governing ; and, with a firmness as unshaken as it was simple, and a sacrifice of popularity the more meritorious as it was not compensated by the pleasures of domination, he told the American people what he believed to be true, and persisted in doing what he thought to be wise. Though the servant of an infant republic, in which the democratic spirit prevailed, he won the confidence of the people by maintaining their interests in opposition to their inclinations. The policy which he pursued while

laying the foundations of a new government, was so moderate yet so rigorous, so prudent yet so independent, that it seemed to belong to the head of an aristocratic Senate ruling over an ancient State. The success with which it was crowned does equal honour to Washington and to his country.

---

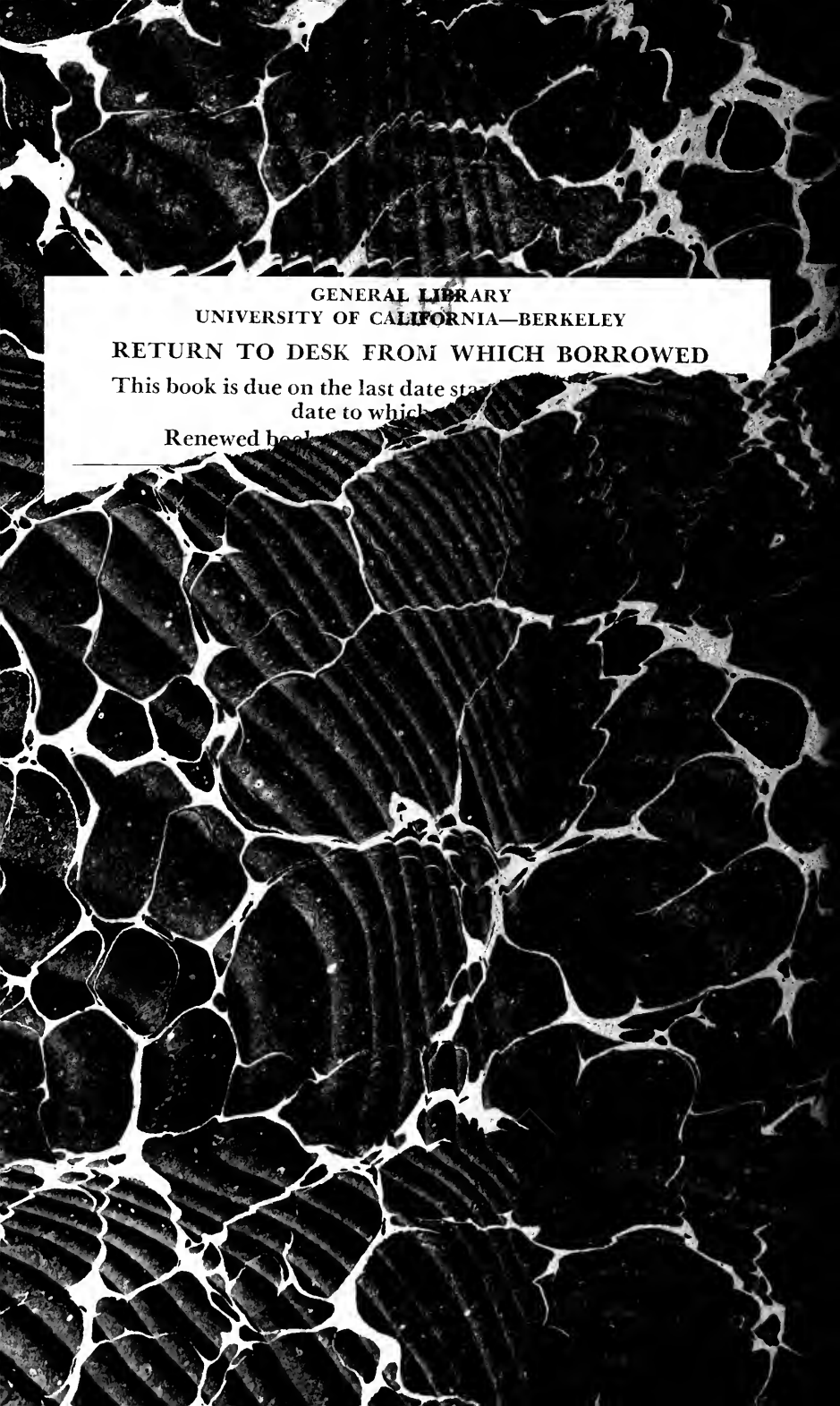
Whether we consider the general destiny of nations, or the lives of the great men whom they have produced; whether we are treating of a monarchy or a republic, an aristocratic or a democratic society, the same light breaks upon us from the facts presented by history: we see that the ultimate success or failure of governments is determined, in the last result, by the same laws; and that the policy which preserves a state from violent revolutions, is also the only policy which can bring a revolution to a successful close.

THE END.









GENERAL LIBRARY  
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA—BERKELEY

RETURN TO DESK FROM WHICH BORROWED

This book is due on the last date stamped  
date to which

Renewed by

---



U. C. BERKELEY LIBRARIES



C052174410

